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**ED'S RANT** 

### "SO, WHEN ARE YOU MOVING BACK?"

It's the question I get asked more than any other when I visit Los Angeles, where I lived from 1986 through 1995. The sentiment behind the inquiry is touching, but I've never once had a desire to return to that metropolis-no matter how many angels dwell there.

My decision not to go back has nothing to do with the amount of gang violence I witnessed first-hand (muggings and murders of close friends included), the Northridge earthquake (January 17, 1994) or the Rodney King uprising (also known as the LA Riots, April 29, 1992). Nor did the decision have anything to do with LA's always-70 degree mono-seasons, the five or more times my car was towed, or the absent and expensive public transportation. In fact, a lot of craziness was entertaining; LA is perpetually its own Hollywood blockbuster debuting in the theater of the public day after day.

I don't ever want to return to LA simply because I have a sense of completion about my experience there, not in a smug been-there-done-that context, but rather, because I know that LA has a way of either sucking you inside its confines for life, or making you just leave. So I left, because I choose not to let it become me, or me it, both its beauty and tragedies.

Los Angeles's cultural cycles constantly swirl through the city like a theme-park rollercoaster, twisting what's already there in new directions while pushing your body through awkward g-forces. Right now, LA is flush-faced in the wind on that first steep downhill plunge, adrenaline surging with new art, music and media ideas flying out of its citizens pockets left and right. Yeah, it's a good time "down there" (as we San Franciscans decorously say) and everyone is feeling the heat from their rising stars.

During my stay, LA was coming out of a "hot" period when everything was happening-the first wave of dancehall/hip-hop underground clubs, Project Blowed and the Good Life café MCs coming to prominence, x-amount of punk, indie and industrial bands tearing up all-ages-club stages, late-night coffeehouses opening, a great literary scene. But by the mid-'90s, the city sobered up post the aforementioned riots, fires, gang warfare and quake. The shops boarded their windows up and people fell idle in their Fresh Jive, Fuct and Ben Davis uniforms. "Heads"

Now, the city's hella back. It's transformed, as only LA can be-a makeover and wardrobe change under its belt before the next round of filming begins. And when I visit now, I do so with pride in the past I was a part of and wonder at all the new things happening there now.

This is a city so overly stereotyped in the media, so branded with clichés and a "plastic" image that Angelenos are having the last laugh and enjoying the hearty substance of a city whose geographic and cultural landscape stretches for miles. I look forward to seeing that sunshine again, even if it is from behind the wheel of a car on the 405 freeway, stuck in traffic. -Tomas





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ON THE COVER: I & I Prodcutions Reggae Ice Cream Truck by Jessica Miller.

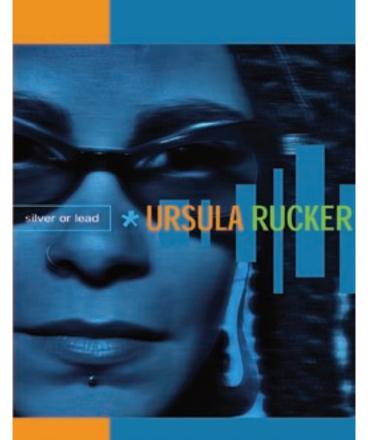
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The follow-up to her Supa Sista debut on IK7 continues with the bold weaving of words and music, backed by The Roots, King Britt, 4 Hero, Jazzanova, Lil Louie Vega, and more.

"Along comes Rucker, battling the bootyliciousness and bling-bling of the status quo, with meaningful words and equally startling beats and sounds" — Flaunt

"Spoken-word songstress Ursula Rucker redefines the parameters of poetry" – VIBE

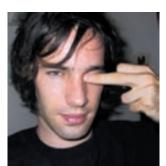
"Rucker is an advocate, journalist, poet, singer, and mother, all identities that are inextricably entwined." – XLR8R







### CONTRIBUTORS



### CARLETON CURTIS

I'm writing this bio on the very day I was laid off from my job at *Strength* Magazine. I'm a little pissed off right now. I think it shows in the photograph. Hopefully when this magazine comes out, potential employers will enjoy the articles I wrote on LA Underground Radio and Emperor Norton, and sign me to a multi-million dollar contract. Sugar mommas may reach me at sircarletonjohns@yahoo.com.



### JESSICA MILLER

Sometimes known as the Wonder Woman of the West Coast, Jessica Miller achieved the impossible this issue, taking 35 LA artist shots in a mere four days. With the help of her trusty driver/butler/sidekick and many caramel macchiatos, Jessica braved searing heat and surly IDM nerds in pursuit of the perfect shot. Stalk her at www.jessica-miller.com.



### RACHEL SWAN

Rachel Swan is a writer, entrepreneur, and hustler, who describes herself in words borrowed from Oakland rapper Too \$hort: "Every bone in my body is a playa bone." A long-time Bay Area resident, she contributes to several local publications, including *Bitch*, *Venus*, *SF Bay Guardian*, and *Bad Subjects*. When she's not writing, Rachel can be found pulling lattes at a local bakery, or riding her skateboard about town.



### DANIEL SIWEK

Daniel Siwek is a New Yorker bred on the Ramones, the Warhol universe, and anything that had a Casablanca record label (meaning Kiss, P-Funk, Donna Summer, etc.). Fun Dip was his drug of choice. After his first documentary, *The Petition For Boo Berry*, Daniel moved to LA (Valencia, to be exact), where he not only got a season pass to Magic Mountain, but went to Cal Arts film school. His pro-

fessor/mentor Ben Caldwell (Fifth Street Dicks/Project Blowed) had him shooting music videos (Aceyalone, Mixmaster Wolf) and it continued out of school when he shot the Voodoo Glow Skulls' "Left For Dead" for Epitaph. He loves writing about bands that no one cares about yet, or anymore.



# **LETTERS**

All letters printed "as is."



BITTER BJÖRK FANS
Dear XLR8R,
I found your article bashing
Björk both tasteless and
offensive. She is a credible,
talented, peaceful artist and
undeserving of such malicious hate. Pick on one of
your own crappy rave
artists next time. At the
very least try to be consis-

ent. You guys gave her

DVD a thumbs up! Get it straight!

Sincerly,

Eric Haves

### **FISH KISS**

Just a quick shout to wish you congrats on your anniversary. It seems like everyone is celebrating the anniversary of something, and that includes me. Araceli, Mika and I celebrated our 5-year wedding anniversary in Mexico and your *XLR8R* issue came in handy as a makeshift table-cloth for the ceviche we feasted on. Yep, I learned how to gut and filet the 2lb fish and managed avoid spilling guts on the magazine.

Thanks for all the support...and keep on keeping on. *Plus plus*,

Gavin Hardkiss



### OGGY FIZZLE

Re: issue 69. Really good stuff. Love the reggae labels. No more reviews of sh\*t like Fannypack, tho, please. P-dogg

### BIG UP

I just need to send a huge big up for all the recent coverage of Jamaican based music. It always surprised me that current music mags so often overlooked its power and quality. I've been an avid reader for years and was waiting for an American mag that represents new music to start recognizing the massive influence that little island has had on everything from hip hop to remixing and drum n bass to 2-step. Not only can you trace the roots of all these styles and more, back to reggae, but its current innovation in dancehall is as good as any of 'em. Rather than the occasional mention of the dub influence you guys have now consistently shown good coverage of all its genres, from Adrian Sherwood to Lenky to Jammy to Elephant Man to Blood and Fire. I always appreciated the diversity of vibes their music represented, from the deep spiritual roots of the Rastas to the party vibes of bashment beats. Now I can recommend your mag with full confidence, for truly covering the spectrum of new electronic music. Lalways sensed your man Tomas had reggae blood in his bones. Thank you! Selector Montes San Diego, CA

### **ROCK ON, ROCK OFF**

Hey dudes,

What's up with all the gratuitous indie rock these days? I read XLR8R when I want to take a break from Quix\*o\*tic, Frase Frrata and the rest of their ilk I'm all for experimental genre-bending but there's a difference between covering acts like Le Tigre, who have made a genuine foray into the world of electronic music, and guitar-bassdrum combos like Low. I love indie rock as much as the next faded t-shirt wearing girl. But I'm not sure I'm down with all this inter-scene mingling just yet. Maybe when indie hipsters stop standing with their arms folded across their chests at shows and saying they like electroclash because they're too smug and/or clever to admit to liking techno then we can talk. Until then, please continue providing the smart, innovative coverage I've come to love over the last few years. By the way, thanks for not jumping on the electroclash bandwagon (unlike other music magazines that really should know better). Kristina

### ISSUE 70 CORRECTIONS

The Crack W.A.R. photo was taken by Jessica Miller. Postal Service band members' names were misspelled. Postal Service is Jimmy Tamborello, Ben Gibbard, and Jenny Lewis, also of Rilo Kiley. On the back cover, we misprinted the Triple Five Soul logo.

# XLR8R'S CALIFORNIA DREAMS CONTEST

To celebrate our LA issue, *XLR8R* teams up with classic California surf outfitters Op and LA independent hip-hop label Mush Records to bring you a contest full of West Coast flavors. Since the '60s, Op has established itself at the top of a sea of surf-oriented brands—their stripe tees in Cali color schemes

lished itself at the top or a sea or surr-onemied brains. The way to provide and light blue/navy are the kind of thing that Japanese kids come all the way to PCH to search for. These days, they are reprising their classic '70s styles and updating the surf look for the post-millennium set. Mush, meanwhile, is home to the United States's most groundbreaking underground hip-hop artists, including many LA-based names like Busdriver, Awol One, Daddy Kev, and Radioinactive; they are currently gearing up to bring you new albums by Octavius, Omid, Thavius Beck, Her Space Holiday, and

Neotropic. To win this contest, tell us what song always reminds you of Los Angeles and why (bonus points for non-obvious answers).

One Grand Prize Winner will receive an outfit from OP plus a CD collection from Mush Records.

One First Prize Winner will receive an outfit from OP.

20 Runners-Up will receive racetothebottom by Andre Afram Asmar on Mush Records.

Entries will be accepted via mail and email. Send your entries to XLR8R's California Dreams contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94171 or email them to contest@xlr8r.com. Include your name, return address, and email address when you enter Entries must be received by October 27, 2003

www.op.com, www.mushrecords.com



Bitter Bastard's Ridiculous UK Garage Names Quiz

It's weird how cartoons and violence go together. Like how gang members always have names like Lil' Snoopy or Sad Girl and then go out and bust caps in each other's Disneynamed asses. Same too with UK garage. In between all the stabbings in Ayia Napa and champagne drinking, UKG heads find the time to come up with utterly ridiculous names for themselves. Take BJ "Bitter" Bastard's quiz to see if you can name the nine fake names among the real ones. Your prize: a smug sense of self-satisfaction and a giant "Boooooo!"

Jon E Cash R.I.P. Brasstooth D-Pone Mr. Bumpy Mr. Fidget Diamond Click Bigshot Wez Dizzee Rascal Chubzee Skinty Simon Sez Babyface J Stonecold GX DJ Texsta Tic Tac Wiley Kat DJ Snipes Youngstar Lady Libra Kurrupt MC DJ Moet Mr. Lipton MC Chandon Dem Lott Charmzy Filfy Cookie PG Tipz Slimzee Dog & Bone Crew Erbz Benga Hindzy D Buseye Hutchy B Status Keflon Dom Perignon Moe Zart Geeneus The Napstar Tex Message Medasyn Mr. Shabz Hatchet Harry Ruff Ryder Sticky Flimsy TJ Rizing Alizá Smiley Professor Flex Tomb Raide Pipe & Slippers Crew Teebone Art Attack Romeo

Answers: Skinty, Dog & Bone Crew, Filmsy, Art Attack,
Chubzee, DJ Moet, MC Chandon, PG Tipz, Tex Message

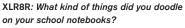
Swiss



# **PREFIX**

COMIC GENIUS Able to summon the essence of Snoopy, Margaret Cho, or Street Fighter's Dhalsim in a few swift penstrokes, LA native Martin Cendreda has spent years perfecting his pencil-necked ink personas. His comic strips and illustrations-which have appeared in 1-UP, Giant Robot, and Dazed & Confused-combine Ghost World's off-center sensibilities and wry humor with Peanuts creator Charles Schulz's sensitivity and a color palette lifted straight from the candy store. "I'm a sucker for all that holiday crap," said Cendreda when we cornered him working on a Halloween-themed issue of his zine, Dang!. He also gave us a few more words on his inspirations and, uh, tits. Vivian Host

XLR8R: What kind of characters do you find yourself gravitating to? Martin Cendreda: Doyle Blackburn from Love & Rockets is one of my all-time favorites. He was the quintessential loner type who did what he wanted and kicked ass if he needed to. I guess I like things in pairs, too: Hopey & Maggie, Enid & Becky, Amy & Jordan, Zubrick & Pogeybait, Bob Hope & Bing Crosby in those Road-To-so-and-so movies. I also like kid characters like Pippi Longstocking, Little Rascals, or that kid from the short film The Red Balloon. That probably comes from fond childhood memories.



MC: Uh, typical boy stuff, lots of sci-fi, comic book stuff. Robots, superheroes, futuristic machinery, dudes with guns, tits and ass. Sometimes just tits. The anarchy sign, hamburgers, barbarians, and lots of robots from Robotech. I was a big fan of that show.

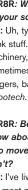
XLR8R: Being an LA native, what do you know about the city that all the people who move there from somewhere else don't?

MC: I've lived in the same neighborhood my whole life. It seems like most people I meet who have moved here from somewhere else know LA better than I do, as far as restaurants, bars, etc. I do know a lot of secret and not-so-secret stairways that connect streets in my neighborhood, so if cops or gangsters or angry hipsters were chasing me, I could make a quick getaway. Also, the street I live on in Echo Park, Micheltorena, was named after one of California's earliest governors. I'm currently reading a book on the Miracle Mile, so I know stupid historical LA stuff like that.

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WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?











### **OBSESSIONS: RUBEN FLEISCHER**





Ruben Fleischer created a party on a San Francisco commuter train for Gold Chains, a cartoon rap wonderland for DJ

Format, and a suburban fantasy for Piebald. It's all in a days work for one of LA's notable underground video directors. Fleischer cut his teeth on the "I Come From San Francisco" video for friend Gold Chains, and since moving to LA from San Francisco in 1998 has moved on to clips for Dizzee Rascal and Dismemberment Plan, among others. Vivian Host

### FLEISCHER ON CHICAGO GHETTO HOUSE:

When I lived in San Francisco with DJ Kit Clayton and Sleng Teng Nat FM, I never really knew anything about dance music and they would play [booty house music] all the time. I wasn't super into most of the techno and San Francisco house music circa 1996. The shit that I responded to the most was Chicago ghetto house music by the likes of DJ Funk, DJ Milton and Wax Master. I became obsessed with it. I don't know if it was the profanity or the fact that it actually had words, as opposed to most other house music that didn't, but I used to walk around with Tourette's just saying the choruses, like "Beat that bitch with a bat" or "Hit it from the back" or "Shake that ass, move those thighs." I couldn't control myself-it was sub-

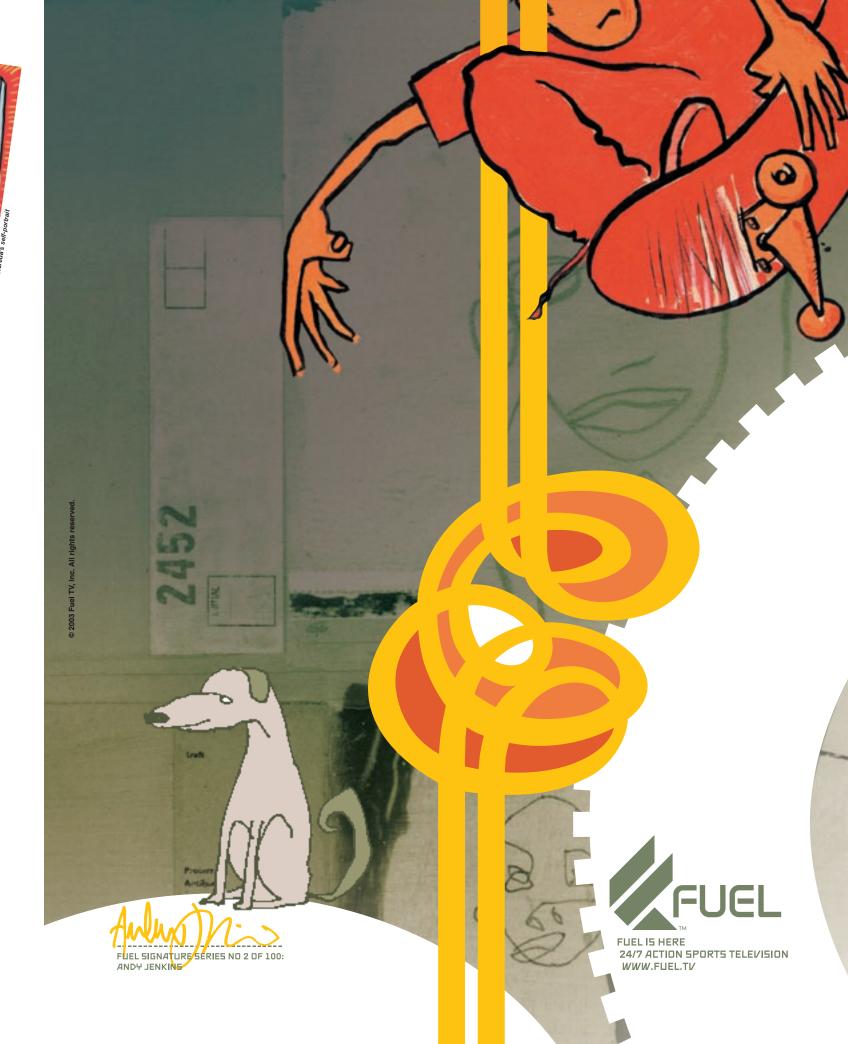
conscious. I would just emit it uncontrollably and in totally inappropriate situations.

We flew out Deeon, Milton and Funk for a party we threw in '96 called That Girl Mona. I was enthralled by them as characters and individuals. DJ Funk had this giant sequined hat with his name emblazoned on it. They were larger than life.

Two years later I was living in LA and I made a little bit of money so I decided to buy a digital video camera and go to Chicago and make a documentary about these guys. I didn't have any of their contact info before I got there. I just kind of showed up. It was the first time I had ever operated a camera, I didn't know anything about lighting, I didn't know anything about sound. I guess my excitement for the music was a huge motivator for me to want to record it and put it on film. I had the footage for two years

I think that the finished product-the 10-minute documentary that it turned into-was the first completed piece that I ever made. I was so excited by the music that I wanted to create images around it and to go along with it, and that's definitely what I've done with all my videos.

Pictured: Ruben Fleischer (top) and DJ Funk

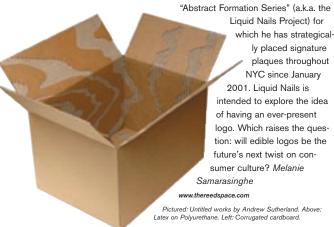




When you walk into an art show, it's rare that you're inspired not only to touch the artwork, but also eat half of it too.

Such was the case at Colorado artist Andrew Sutherland's jam-packed opening, "Formation," at Staple's The Reed Space on NYC's Lower East Side. Sutherland's signature amorphous shapes-resembling shiny, frosted cookies-were emblazoned onto canvas, wood, ceramic and corrugated cardboard. An accompanying video detailed the extensive process behind his creations.

Sutherland-whose background is in multimedia art and design, computer graphics, sculpting, photography and painting-is best known for his





**COOL DOWN Big Chill** (August 1-3, 2003) has now become the benchmark for the UK summer festival crowd, so uplifting and stress reducing you'd be forgiven for thinking you need a doctor's prescription to attend.

Festival creators Pete Lawrence and Katrina Larkin serve up a warm welcome, creating a stunning virtual village of 16,000 happy campers against the backdrop of the pristine, rolling Malvern Hills. With two large open air stages, full-tilt club and multimedia tents, Big Chill FM radio, bespoke DJ-driven cocktail bars, an art trail, body and soul therapies, a kids' tent and even a comedy zone, there were agonizing entertainment choices to be made.

London Elektricity with the mighty Robert Owens kept mind and feet engaged with soulful drum & bass rhythms. A quick leap across the field yielded Luke Vibert and the Light Surgeons's experimental soundscapes, a bewitching amalgamation of audiovisual narratives using architectural imagery and the soundtrack from the movie of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*.

Nightmares on Wax held court with a beat-laden set that segued into Tom Middleton's deeply hypnotic grooves, but we were on a mission to catch Roger Eno, whose mastery of multiple instruments and technological application was both enigmatic and spellbinding. The Cinematic Orchestra equally mesmerized

with their soundtrack interpretation of the 1929 Russian documentary *Man With A Movie Camera*, as did Dubtribe, whose Sunday sunset set peaked with an extended version of their classic tune "Do It Now".

A wholesome feeling of optimism prevailed, and the festival was happily devoid of any woozy New Age or raggedy pisshead elements. From the moment Roger Eno and his delightful family pitched their tent next to us and regaled us with gripping yarns of Uncle Brian and Mr. Henderson the Parrot, things just kept getting better and better. Chrissie Wilson

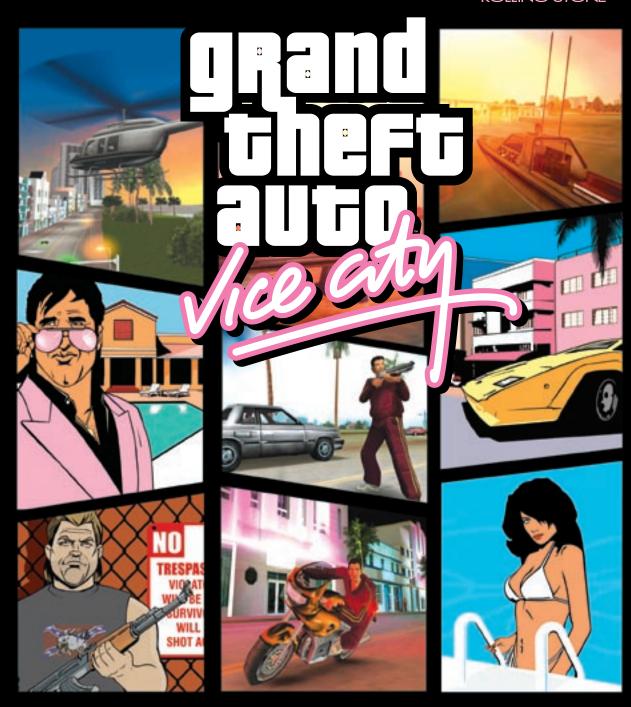
www.bigchill.ne



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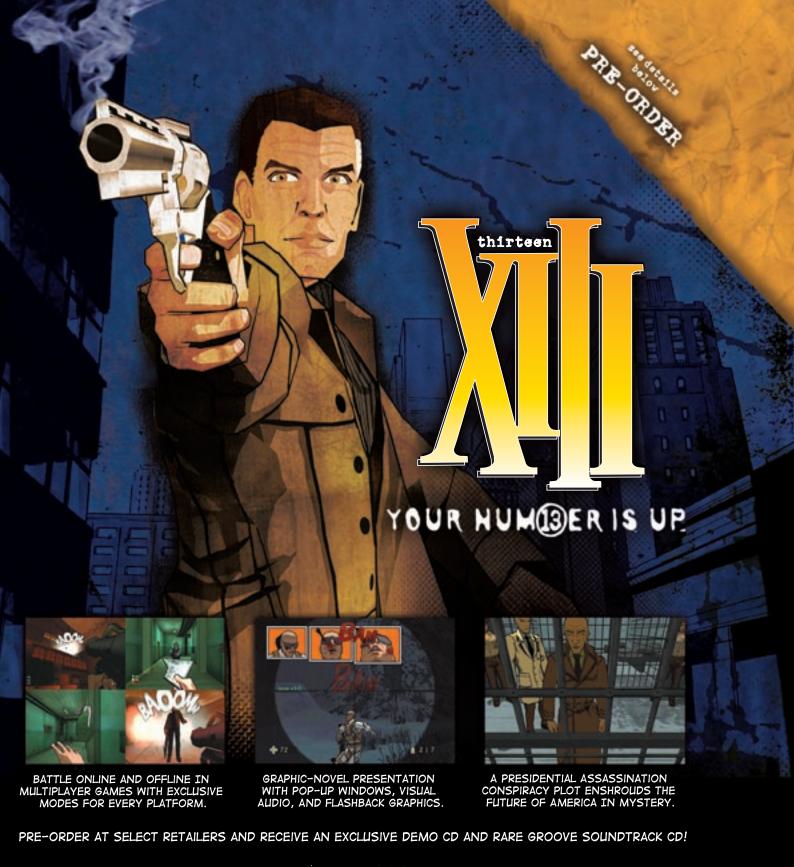


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### VIDEOGAME SPOTLIGHT

LUCKY THIRTEEN Today's futuristic video game graphics and intricate plots don't mesh well with 8-bit's beloved blips and bleeps, which is why every title strives for a

soundtrack that is palatable when the controllers aren't in hand. When Ubisoft was developing XIII (Ubisoft; PS2/Xbox/GameCube/PC; \$39.95)—a noir thriller with a plot similar to that of the movie Memento—they turned to San Francisco stalwart Mark Herlihy and his Future Primitive franchise to musically capture the game's '70s-inspired comic book good looks and ultra-modern plot. "We wanted the music to somewhat sound like '70s-style instrumentation but keep it more organic," says Herlihy from his



Haight Street storefront. "A lot of the tracks have live elements and we gave that a modern twist by making those into loops." The resulting soundtrack features funky breakbeat numbers from Romanowski, Z-Trip, Tino Corp and J-Boogie, and a CD accompanying the game will feature the same tracks mixed by turntable terrorists Faust and Shortee.

Herlihy is busy working on a new EP by Romanowski, his Future Primitive clothing line, and an upcoming compila-

tion called *Party in My Pants*, but says he still finds time to press a few buttons. "I had stopped playing videogames at Ms. Pacman and Spyhunter," he laughs. "But since they approached me to do this game, I've bought myself a Playstation. Now, I'm hooked on *Grand Theft Auto*." Vivian Host

www.ubi.com

PACE YOURSELF An example of technology at its most competitive, the strict rules governing rally car racing call for innovative engineering mixed with pure skill and adrenaline. Imagine blazing down gravel backroads at 120mph, bouncing between snow banks on studded tires, or throwing your car around



corners with the handbrake on the streets of some small European

town. Rally cars are stripped apart and rebuilt with the bare necessities: roll cages and very powerful brakes and engines. A team consisting of a driver responsible for going like hell and a co-driver who calls out the upcoming corners and straight-aways controls each car. In *Colin McRae Rally 3* (Codemasters; PS2; \$39.99), the third version of the top Scottish driver's rally simulation, the likeness to real rally driving is stunning. Racing against the clock in 64 stages across eight countries, the voice of renowned co-driver, Nicky Grist, guides you with verbal cues written in the cryptic language of rally pace notes. Once you get the hang of following the pace notes, the realism of the handling, speed and damage to the car make racing through the stages a very thrilling experience. *Andrew Smith* 

www.codemasters.com



### START TO FINNISH There's a

down on the Helsinki docks. ing's coming to life in the ast Finnish warehouse space known as The Cable Factory-something om the future, something electronic. The rise of the machines has begun. The good news is that they're under he control of artists whose diversity uns from the glitch-techno of Luomo o Ralph Myerz & the Jack Herren Band's easy listening. At the annual Koneisto Festival (July 25-27), the Finns don't seem to care if they're lisening to Erlend Oye's acoustics, Gilles Peterson's jazzualization, Moloko's pop-rock-disco, Exogenic ecords's Scandanavian psy-trance or Miss Kittin's electro hammering. It all makes sense, and they respond

appropriately, lathering up a sweat or nodding sternly, depending on what's offered. As dawn breaks after each mammoth night of electronic pandemonium, those left standing trawl down to Kirma, a club where they can't serve alcohol until 9 am, but everyone keeps dancing anyway. *Thomas H Green* 

### **DVD ROUNDUP**

Everyone knows that staying at home is the new going out. With that in mind, you can abandon your usual home-bound rituals of dancing around in your underwear to Peaches songs, eating Cool Whip out of the tub with your fingers, and Dustbusting for there are tons of DVDs out this month with which to amuse yourself. On the serious side, New Yorker Films releases *Life And Debt*, which explores the effects the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and globalization have had on Jamaican life. Director Stephanie Black directed *Sesame Street* episodes and reggae music videos to stay in the country while making the 2001 film, which shows how individual Jamaicans are coping with day-to-day existence as impacted by other countries' economic agendas. Disturbing ike woah! Moving on to lighter fare,

Tommy Boy releases their Kung Faux series, which has a lot

less nudity than *Hip-Hop Honeys*, but is only slightly more funny as rappers do the voiceovers of kung fu movies. Get the bong out or don't bother. Further couchbound trippiness is available on the *Animatrix* (Warner Brothers), which features animated shorts from the creators of *The Matrix*. We get sick of anime rather quickly but this stuff is well done, unlike the rave scene in the

actual Matrix Reloaded movie. Keanu Reeves not included. Electro fans can brush up on the scene with *Electro-Diska*, a rather hastily put together pastiche that nevertheless includes good interviews with Adult., Ectomorph, DJ Hell and oth-

ers. Meanwhile, *Living on Video* (Cohaagen Music) features "music videos from the synth underground;" peep footage from Soviet, Nukleon, Ganymede and others. Now that parties are all but banned, you can rave in the privacy of your own home with Barclay Crenshaw's *Intellect: Techno, House*,

Progressive (Stepfilm), which also features a DJ tutorial, and get up close and personal with turntablist drum & bass fiend

DJ Craze in Live in Puerto Rico (D-Rom) Moving

DJ Craze in *Live in Puerto Rico* (D-Rom). Moving on to the streets, take your pick between flicks about graff, street racing, skating, and Dirty South hip-hop. Like a bad Gallagher stage show-and, appropriately, featuring Gallager himself-*American Misfits* (LSM Films) is the latest from *Jackass* alum Wee Man and partner Laban Pheidias, who capi-

talize on the franchise with more tits, ass, minimotocross, Steve-O stripper juggling and, oh yeah, skating. *Timelapse* (360 Video/Redline Ent.) is car porn for Japanese import car lovers, taking you inside tricked out Civics and Acuras; unfortunately, the film doesn't really get into the culture behind the sport, but it's nice eye

candy for the ephedrine set. San Francisco's Upper Playground and Fifty24 Gallery present *Dithers*, featuring interviews by Ricky Powell and Reid Van Renesse with all the artists you know and love, including Jo Jackson, Dug One, Andy Jenkins, Grey, Stash and on and on. It's not flashy or trashy, but contains some incredibly interesting commentary and is a good primer on these modern-

day heroes. Last, but not least by any means, the Boot Camp Clik present *From the Front Lines* (Duck Down), which will not only teach you the right way to wear many hats–from baseball hats to panty-heads to pimp fedoras–but is also a most delightful romp through hip-hop stupidity, with Boot Camp pausing only to look at big old booties and meet up with friends including 50 Cent, Dave Chappelle, and Nate Dogg. Shit, I just ran out of Ben & Jerry's. *Heather McNamara* 



PREFIX Words David Weissberg Images Jessica Miller



**ANTHONY SEGURA (Student)** 

What are you buying?
As I Lay Dying
Most stylish band ever?
Blood Brothers
What's LA's best-kept secret?
It sucks.



MARY SPIELBERGER (Fashion student)

What are you buying?
Jane's Addiction, Strays
Most stylish band ever?
Stevie Nicks

What's LA's best-kept secret?

There are some people here with substance.



### QUINCY (Musician)

What are you buying?
Stevie Wonder, Fulfillingness First Finale
Most stylish band ever?
The Isley Brothers
What's LA's best-kept secret?

Its thriving underground music scene.

### ON THE SPOT: AMOEBA MUSIC



LA's Amoeba Music may be just a baby, but it's already threatening to grow larger than its parents—the Bay Area Amoeba locations. The block-long music emporium—located on the venerable Sunset Blvd in Hollywood—continues the Amoeba mission to stock one of everything under the sun, catering to a variety of customers, whether they're after albums by Les Savy Fav, Savath & Savalas, or Savage Garden. On a recent blazing hot LA day, we ducked into the cool confines of this music supermarket, and quizzed locals on sound, style, and the city's best-kept secrets.

www.amoebamusic.com



JEWLIE PEARSON (Student)

What are you buying?
I Am the World Trade Center
Most stylish band ever?
Devo

What's LA's best-kept secret?

The Attic vintage store in Orange County.



### JOEY GOSSLIN (Chef)

What are you buying?
Califone, Room Sound
Most stylish band ever?
Devo

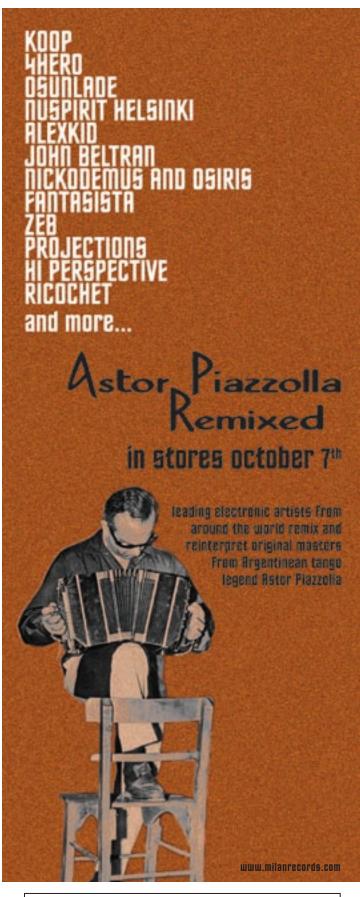
What's LA's best-kept secret? Its rep is built on hype.



### FELIPE MELO (Student)

What are you buying?
Can, Delay...1968
Most stylish band ever?
Os Mutantes
What's LA's best-kept secret?

Benito's Taco Stand





Grooves.
Part of The Complete Collection.
An AMAZING AFRAY OF MUSIC, MOVIES, BOOKS & GAMES.

Hillywood - New York Trees Square Linkin Figures and Long Maked - San Francisco - Ostardo Walt Diseay World Fescer - Chicago - New Orlains - Cherine - Las Wagain - Mainr - Burbani - Spanners - Ostar Mass - Organi - Willi



MATMOS

### **ELEMENTS: LA FOCUS**

Remember during the '80s when that law was on the books that stated (in a Robocop voice): "If you're planning a movie set in Los Angeles, it must contain mandatory shopping montage with one of the following: Nerd/Father/Mannequin/Acne-Free Prostitute.

Under penalty of death, this mall makeover can only

happen to the tune of "Walking on Sunshine." Please proceed to the Beverly Center for reconditioning and gratuitous escalator shot." These days, becoming "LA" needn't be so painful. Just grab a few of the great local-only items from this page, set your iPod to "My All-Time Favorite DFA Mix, Ever" (or Brujeria's "Kill Whitey," whatever's your poison) and Crip-walk around your favorite Silverlake boutique 'til someone busts a cap in your trucker hat. Happy shopping! David J Weissberg

1. T -Shirt and Hat from Leche (Available at Span of Sunset; www.spanofsunset.com) 2. Custom shirt from Deathcamp Collective (Available at Rojas. For custom orders email defactodeathcamp@aol.com) 3. Limited Edition Arkitip DC Shoes (www.arkitip.com) 4. Kramer Ergot #4 Comic Anthology (Published by Avodah Books. Available at Meltdown; www.meltcomics.com) 5. Sergeant Kilgore doll (available at Span of Sunset; www.spanofsunset.com) 6. Florencio Zavala Pillow (available from sixspace gallery; www.sixspace.com) 7. X-Large limited-edition trucker hat and matching sk-8 high-tops (available at X-Large; www.xlarge.com)

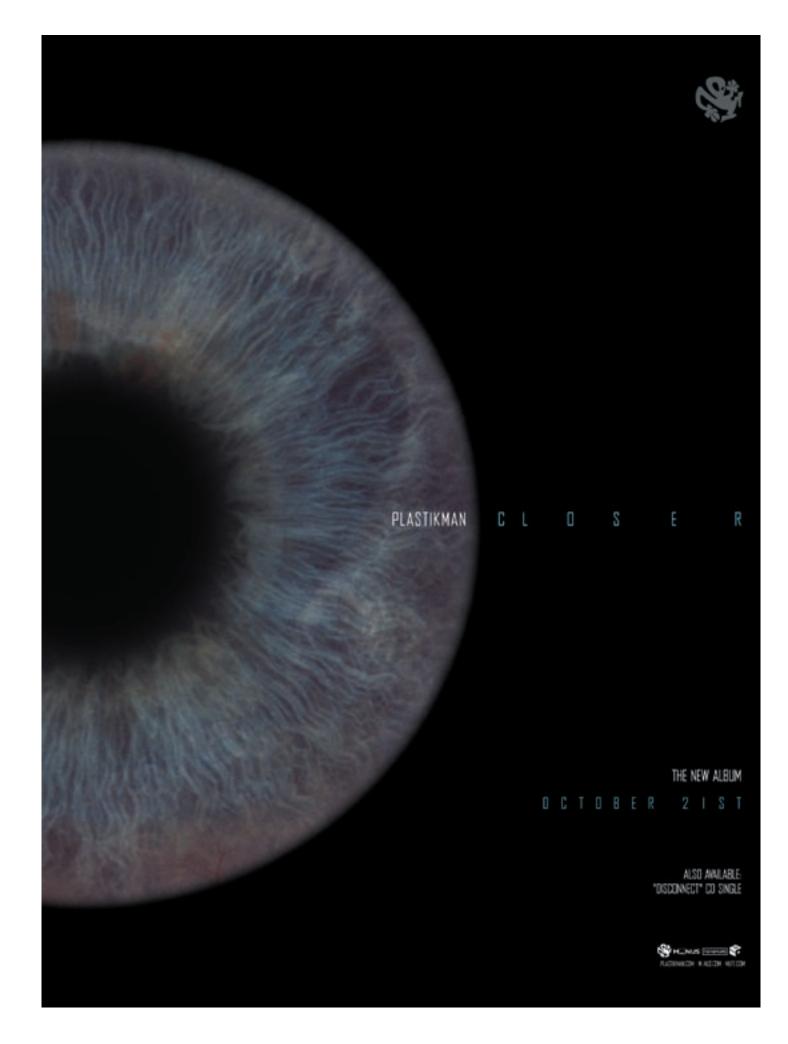












THE LA ISSUE



Rarely can you utter this phrase without a duck and a wince, as if expecting a flying coffee cup to the head. And you always want to say it equipped with a mental crib sheet of reasons why, why, why?

You know that coffee cup will be scrawled with all the reasons why not. It's fake. It's plastic. The people are two-dimensional. The freeways are congested and so are my lungs from breathing in the equivalent of twenty unfiltered Parliaments.

Try this small talk out on people who live here, however, and you'll be met with the same *cara de vinagre* you get from New Yorkers when you tell them they're rude and their city is filled with crime. All this conversation is strictly for the outsiders; you never have to sell Los Angeles to Angelenos. They know this city is an ever-evolving jungle textured with its history and its secrets, both seedy and sublime.

Angelenos know that this city is not, and will never be, *Blade runner*. Space—not of the futuristic variety—is plentiful, and its abundance is usually the first reason Angelenos cite for living in the region. They know Downtown will never be the center (fact: LA has none) and the smog will idly roll past the sell date of 2019 without ever changing its Pantone Grey 1c hue. Angelenos, however, still secretly get giddy when seeing the Bradbury Building or driving through the Second Street tunnel.

Los Angeles is not "surreal"-it's pop, pure as the driven blow. Over-the-top Beverly Hills tackiness, star sightings at restaurants, and those ubiquitous white filming trucks parked on our streets are pure visual fodder for the other 99% of us. While Angelenos are adept at the art of indifference, the big secret is that we still crane our necks like a four-car pile-up to gawk.

All men have secrets and here is mine/so let it be known. Morrissey lives (and subsequently whines less now) in Los Angeles, and Johnny Rotten anarchically surfs these shores. Film crews routinely dolly Downtown alongside cop cars marked "NYPD," and did it break anyone else's heart to find out that the backroads of Dukes of Hazzard were more Mulholland than Mason-Dixon?

Not unlike some of its citizens, Los Angeles often comes under the knife for being fake. It is still, however, the Wild West, where celebrity busts and shady backroom political deals can be darker than any *noir*. And nothing is more real than the few short blocks that separate *Z Boys* from *Boyz in tha Hood*.

While there is a staggering amount of nightlife in this town with its good underground clubs, cheesy celebrity clubs, gallery openings, now-hip dive bars, now-divey hip bars and countless music venues, Angelenos also know that sometimes staying in is the new going out. A case of Pabst, ten of your friends, a barbeque and a backyard can be just as fun. And remember, that's why you moved here. *David J. Weissberg* 

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?
Joe Frank, *Decline of Western Civilization*and Villa Corona in Atwater.



# TWO DREADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE AT BRINGING VITALITY TO LA'S MUSIC SCENE.

You might see them parked out in front of a reggae concert, their red, gold and green-painted ice cream truck blaring the sounds of Black Uhuru or the latest Sizzla single. For Shakespeare and Aurelito-heads of LA-based music promotion and soundsystem team I & I Productions-music is an occupation that should, quite literally, move you.

Their vehicle, modeled on Jamaica's mobile record store-in-a-truck outfits like Swing-A-Ling's, is both a representation of their mission to bring music directly to the people and their thirst for unique creative outlets.

Responsible for Chocolate Bar at Gabah–a six-year-running underground hip-hop/dancehall/funk/progressive beats institution featuring foundation DJs such as Daz (of Truthseekers Radio on KPFK-FM), T-Lee and DJ Hier (Positive Rhythm Soundsystem)–the dynamic dread duo are rarely seen without their trademark wide smiles and irie dispositions.

Shakespeare (a Crown Heights Brooklyn, NY native) and Aurelito (originally from the Philippines by way of Chicago) collaborate fluidly—at their nights one will DJ and the other will MC, and then they'll swap roles. We hailed up these two innovators to see what else a-gwaan for l&l in the near future.

## XLR8R: What other events, art, music activities do you do?

Aurelito: Well, there's Chocolate Bar of course, and also Barrio Fiesta, which is an I & I Soundsystem event-kind of like a moving party, wherever the soundsystem goes.

Shakespeare: We do Milk & Honey Studios and produce artists and do mix tapes. I help DJ Daz with Truthseekers Radio on KPFK, Saturday mornings 3-6AM. Aurelito does some video stuff too.

### XLR8R: How did Chocolate Bar come about?

A: I used to do house parties in Echo Park when I first moved out here in 1994. Shakespeare came to one of my parties and we met formally a couple years later. We started Chocolate Bar mid-April of 1997 and had Mos Def, EPMD, Saul Williams, Mr. Vegas and others pass through over the years.

### XLR8R: How did you acquire the soundsystem

A: The concept of doing the truck came to us about four or five years ago. We had to keep the idea "hush" for years 'cause you know how Los Angeles is-somebody's gonna bite it. About two years ago my girlfriend said, 'Yo I saw this ice cream truck for sale in Echo Park.' So I found it—it's a '69 Dodge ice cream truck-and bought it that night. It took us 10

months to restore cause it was pretty beat up-rust, dents; we had to build shelves, cabinets, redo the engine, the brakes, and repaint the whole thing.

**S:** We're eventually going to be selling things like our mix CDs, our t-shirts, the dancehall issue of *Beat* [reggae] magazine and handing out Island Records promos.

# XLR8R: What special powers does the truck have? A: We're invisible to Babylon. Seriously, the police

A: We're invisible to Babylon. Serious can't see us when we're in it!

**S:** And also, in LA you can't drive it two blocks without someone putting their fist in the air, revolutionstyle; [we see] old ladies smiling, people beeping their horns and kids running up to it.

### XLR8R: What's your motivation for staying in Los Angeles? What keeps you positive?

S: You need [the adversity of the city], it kind of helps you keep your focus. And-it might sound crazy-but the light down here, every thing seems so light and wide open, like a [blank] canvas [that you] can just start painting.

Check the I&I info lines: 323-860-3232 or 213-625-ARTS.

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

Aurelito: The multi-cultural aspect of the city. The different types of people you see at events and everywhere.

Shakespeare: What's underneath Aurelito's crown.

31 OHLBER

**○KLB3B3**0



### SINCE THE RISE OF BUFFMONSTER, DEFACEMENT OF PUBLIC PROPERTY HAS NEVER LOOKED SO DAMN CUTE.

Let's say for a moment you were one of those anonymous grey utility boxes that dot any city, a fading metallic hulk just baking in the sun like a retired bank robber from Sexy Beast. Would you look at the high points of your life as "occasionally leaned on, occasionally bumped into, occasionally painted over"? Or maybe, if even for just a few days, as part of the wall of a contemporary urban gallery displaying the work of artistic outsiders, standing proud like a motionless docent.

For over two years now, Buffmonster has been helping these underprivileged, underutilized boxes throughout Los Angeles by decorating a staggering amount of them with his trademark scrubbing bubble. But that's not to say that there's only one "monster" in the artist's arsenal. There are "normal" mon-

sters, monsters with reading glasses, monsters with eye patches, dubious horned ones, and others that come bearing flowers. But if this all smacks too much of vandalism for your taste (again, the boxes may disagree with you here), Buff's work can also be seen indoors at LA's true contemporary museum, New Image Art, as well as in upcoming shows such as Dublab's homage to the 12" single cover, Up Our Sleeve.

While he might garnish the occasional telephone pole, or paint designs on rusted and flattened spray cans for those indoor types, he never abandons his biggest fans. And from the bottom of their little boxshaped hearts, they thank him.

XLR8R: Both the police and other writers in LA can be particularly brutal...

Buffmonster: Probably as many times as I've been stopped by graff writers or police, I've been asked directions by people driving around lost. I wish

people would just leave me alone when I'm working. I don't show up at your job and say, "So what are you doing?"

### XLR8R: Why did you come here?

Buffmonster: I came to LA from Hawaii to attend college. It's impossible to accomplish anything out there, so I left. LA is the only place to be.

XLR8R: What do you contribute to Los Angeles? Buffmonster: Next to Angelyne, I don't know anyone else who has put up so much pink and magenta in this city. I'm certainly adding to the visual clutter, but I like to think that I'm doing it in a positive and humorous way.

### WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

Stay out of downtown. It's always trouble. My car has been broken into and towed more times than I'd like to remember. Other than that, I recommend [the Mexican rice drink] horchata.

THE UNOFFICIAL QUEEN OF UNDERGROUND HIP-HOP UNLEASHES POP LOCKIN' JOINTS WITH HARD-HITTING

Whether she's belting a contralto aria about her gangsta pussy or rocking the mic at Storvville in SF with her hair rolled in garnet-red Christmas lights, Medusa is anything but a humdrum MC. In fact, few heads would debate this rhymesmith's way of describing herself as a pastiche of all things proud, tough and hip-hop. "I break it down in the song 'Cold Piece of Work, which covers all the facets of my personality," she says. "There's a gangsta in me who wears a wifebeater and sags his jeans. But I'm also Mone, the soul sista, who wears long goddess dresses. Then there's Bebe Meme, the MC who's got an old school vibe, like Roxanne Shante."

Straddling lines and dizzying fans comes naturally to Medusa. At age 7, she accompanied her aunt Billy Rae Calvin-of the psychedelic funk group the Undisputed Truth-on tours through the LA circuit. Blithely unaware of her future stardom, Medusa would slip backstage to hang out with members of the Jackson Five, and drum on the bottom of a plastic pumpkin head while her uncle played guitar. That year, the erstwhile Bebe Meme wrote her first song, "Angel In the Sky."

Six years later, when Medusa was thirteen, her mom tuned the radio to LA's KJLH one day, and Medusa heard Rose Royce singing a revamped version of her song. "My aunt wrote their hit song 'Wishing on a

Blending Motown and gangsta rap influences with the sweeping, operatic style she gleaned from growing up in the Baptist church choir, Medusa cross-pollinates what she calls "an organic sound with rattleyour-trunk hip-hop." She began writing rhymes in the '80s as Lady Tiktut, got locked up for six months, and came out of jail ready to push the music full-throttle. Medusa got the ball rolling when she and her cousin Ko Ko started the monthly club Nappy At Da Roots, which is still crackin' every second Friday of the month at LA's Fais Do Do. It's a place where heads can kick back, grub on traditional Louisiana cuisine, and groove to the smokingest hip-hop in the LA underground.

"My music was like a pot of gumbo," the MC says. "It simmered as I added more seasoning, and by the sixth or seventh year it started bubbling in a serious way." In 1996, Medusa formed the crew Feline Science, a group of sisters with business skills, pop-lockin' routines, and a funky old-school style. Last year they released the compilation Unda Ground Crewed, which-despite its spartan production-is the most hard-hitting piece of proud black woman hip-hop since Queen Latifah's Black Reign.

As for the shock value of her lyrics, Medusa says she's using rhymes to persuade, rather than provoke: "Folks' mommas come to shows, and get a new outlook on the word 'pussy,' and many guys have told me that after watching me perform, they're ready to go back to the lab and rethink the way they treat females." That's a cold piece of work, indeed.



THE LA ISSUE Words Daniel Siwek Image Jessica Miller Words David J. Weissberg Image Jessica Miller



# THAT KID NAMED MILES BREAKS IT ON

When Miles Tackett gives up the funk, you best believe that it's the whole funk and nuthin' but the funk, because there's no way you'd catch his act, Breakestra, fakin' the funk. The son of Fred Tackett-guitarist for one of Southern California's most versatile and idiosyncratic bands, Little Feat-that little kid named Miles inherited pop's prowess, and is now an accomplished multi-instrumentalist in his own right. Proving himself by performing with such luminaries as B.B. King, Macy Gray and Black Eyed Peas, Tackett comes from a scene of funkateers who refuse to let hip-hop be the only representation of funk. He's out searching breaks alright, but not for a sampler. Rather, that lost vinyl cut is brought back to life by a nimble and stankin' band.

Tackett will be the first to tell you that DJ culture inspired his quest for funk verité. "Cut Chemist,

Mixmaster Wolf and Marvski used to cut up breaks back in 1990 and '91," he recalls, "so we wanted the band to emulate that cutting, only with live music." DJs like Kool Herc started chopping breaks with records, but Miles envisioned how cool it would be if there was a live band on the figurative ones and twos, starting and stopping, dropping break after break of live funky soul.

That was the goal with Breakestra's demo, The Live Mix, Pt. 1, and their Stones Throw debut, The Live Mix, Pt. 2. The band goes through a tirade of jams, all with the good-golly howling scowl of a soulful Mixmaster Wolf, who-by his sheer Sanford and Son-like presence-you'd swear was the best showman around. In his dusty jackets and uneven trousers, Wolf is a modern ambassador of funk. And if you remember the gloryhallastoopidness of those old Bill Cosby Jell-O commercials, you'll hear early proof; it's a rare trivia tidbit that when the chorus in the jingle goes, "Kids go ape for Jell-O grape," Wolf (as Bill Cosby) shouts, "They got the jiggles

and the wiggles all over the place!"

When they're not playing at the Root Down (their own night, which brings in many of LA's underground hip-hop heroes), the Breakestra is on the road, sharing the stage with acts like the late Sun Ra's Arkestra. And even though their impetus is the preservation of forgotten funk (the Root Down even prints their own baseball cards honoring the likes of Roy Ayers and Cymande), their recent EP, "Deuces Up," encouraged them to create new classics.

"The new album will be 90 percent original material," Tackett promises, announcing the twist, "I've been dying to use more MCs." Judging from new singles like "Show N Prove," Tackett's dead-on when he concludes, "Breakestra [does] more than just educate-we're there to rock a party."

www.breakestra.com, www.rootdownclub.com

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

Miles: I hate to be biased, but it has to be the Root Down. It's one of the funkiest, most progressive DJ nights happening in Los Angeles. I'll also say Funky Sole [Miles and Egon from Stones Throws night]; there's nply no other venues playing that variety of stuff.



THE LA ISSUE Words David J. Weissberg Image Jessica Miller Words Paul Sullivan Image Jessica Miller

### ARTIST RORY WILSON EXPLAINS WHY HE IS SEW DOWN FOR THE PAST.

Designer Paul Smith once said, "You can find inspiration in everything. If you can't, then you are not looking properly." While this statement may go over the heads of those just staring at blank canvas waiting for "it" to magically happen, Rory Wilson, like Travis Bickle perched in front of a mirror, repeats this mantra to great effect. Images of discarded army helmets now functioning as flowerpots, potbellied Vikings, and French Situationist graphics effortlessly come together under his Text t-shirt line.

While "designing" might come close to describing what he does, "exhuming" may be a

little closer, "I like designers from the '60s for not being too design-conscious," Wilson explains. "Hans Schleger, Bruno Munari, Saul Bass, Paul Rand and Robert Brownjohn. Hipgnosis and Roger Dean made crazy album cover art. And my dad's stamp collection is pretty amazing, too, All that stuff indirectly finds its way into my design. I'm constantly finding new things to research...lately it's Mexican horror movie posters and old restaurant menus."

All this inspiration is distilled into his fine art as well. To the outsider, needlepoint kittens, birds and typo-

graphic

ne Krylon hisses that comprise the side which he often exhibits. n that fine piece of varn that sepaign from art, he's reluctant to admit

nk I do crafts more than art. I'm too esult-driven to be a 'good artist.' It started with oint, mostly, because I'm kind of a perfectionist and it's pretty hard to mess up a

RORY WILSON

### FROSTY AND HIS CAST OF ECCENTRIC DUBLAB.COM DJS ARE RESHAPING NET RADIO INTO AN OBLONG THING.

Internet radio station Dublab-formed by Jon Buck and Mark "Frosty" McNeillbegan broadcasting back in September 1999. Today it is one of the area's premier online music sources, with a list of regulars to die for and a music policy that champions good electronic music in all its forms.

"Dublab's aim has always been to musically entertain hungry ears," says McNeill (who records with Daedelus as Adventure Time for Plug Research). "We hope within this process we can expose folks to music they wouldn't otherwise hear. Our DJs have complete freedom to journey far and wide in the mix. This is a return to the original power of radio as a form of creative expression. We want to be a part of our listeners' international culture. Hopefully what they hear impacts their lives."

The station's roster of regulars-known as the Labrat DJs-reads like a who's who of innovative local talent: Nobody (Ubiquity Records), J-Logic (Soundlessons), Carlos Niño (Ammoncontact), Kutmah (Soundlessons), J-Love, Derelict, Allen Avenessian (Plug Research), Jimmy Tamborello (Dntel/Postal Service/Figurine), Flynn & Morpho, and Daedelus (Plug Research, Mush Recordings) are just some of the names that routinely grace Dublab's airwaves

In the last couple of years, the station has managed to knock out some CDs too, so the Dublab vibe can be experienced without an internet connection. Dublab Presents: Freeways was put out on Emperor Norton in 2001, and Summer, a ben-

efit project for Dublab to which artists donated their tracks for free, was released last year. Both were well-received. The crew plans to start a new twelve-inch series soon that will feature Caural, Madlib, Umod (a.k.a. Domu), Minirepertoire, Will.I.Am, Camping and the Postal Service remixing Dntel, and more. "We dip our hands into a lot," comments McNeill. "We support and produce lots of live events around town. Any night of the week, you're sure to find Dublab DJs playing tunes in and out of town. Our big project right now is an art tour called Up Our Sleeve: the dublab covers project (www.upoursleeve.org), but we are also supervising the music for a surfing TV show called RB5x, have a community-action initiative called the dublab sprout project (www.dublab.com/sprout./asp), and are focusing currently on [an effort to distribute] world maps to kids."

Needless to say, within all this activity, the station still manages to uphold a strategy of diversity. "I would get bored listening to a single style of music," explains McNeill. "I know most others feel the same way. When I go to a friend's house, I rarely see one type of album on their shelves. People want to be excited and turned on. We try to be a source for this excitement. Dublab is a human radio experience. Labrat DJs are always searching and want to share their discoveries. The DubStream connects the past and future of music. In ten minutes you might hear a tune from 1933 followed by a new song that won't be released for a year. Our streams are a snapshot of soulful soundscapes."

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?



THE LA ISSUE
Words Tim Pratt Image Jessica Miller
Words Ron Nachmann Screamers Image Susan Seager



FROM A RECORD POOL TO A NATIONALLY RESPECTED PR FIRM IN UNDER A DECADE, LA'S LYNN HASTY OF GREEN GALACTIC KEEPS THE WORLD SAFE FOR ELECTRONIC MUSIC.

Lynn Hasty is a bubbly talker, full of energy and *very* excited about life in general. And she seems to have picked the perfect way to make a living: owning and running a PR firm that represents a wide range of largely electronic artists, as well as film, art, fashion and books and restaurants.

Green Galactic recently celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of operations, an amazing feat when you consider Hasty originally launched the company as a record pool for DJs. Located at the famous corner of Hollywood and Vine since 1993, Hasty-who grew up in suburban Detroit-said the name Green Galactic was originally intended for another record pool.

"Plus, I'm really obsessed with the color green," Hasty says. It's true. Even one of her long-running parties is called Green House.

Though her formative years were spent soaking up the then-nascent techno scene in the Motor City, Hasty said she moved to California to do something involving business. For a few years, she bounced around in film production while pursuing her musical interests. But when longtime West Coast dance promoter Malachy O'Brien was in a near-fatal accident in 1993, the incident changed Hasty.

"I felt so hopeless, so I decided to do a fundraising event to help with his medical bills," she says.
"But then I realized I was out of touch with the dance scene at the time. I knew how to plan events, but I didn't know anybody."

While calling around for advice, she hooked up with a local promoter who eventually became her record-pool partner.

Within a year, Green Galactic promotions was up and running, with Detroit's Carl Craig as her first client. From there, Hasty began attracting an impressive client roster, including Aphex Twin, John Tejada (her longtime partner), Meat Beat Manifesto, Derrick May, Derrick Carter, Doc Martin, Bill Laswell, Underworld and Wamdue Project.

Green Galactic also did publicity work for

events such as ResFest, as well as dance-related films like *Rise*, *Modulations* and *Better Living Through Circuitry*.

"There's definitely an art and science to it, of taking on cool things that help elevate us and our reputation." Hasty says.

Although the company expanded in 2000 by adding a New York-based office, tough economic times forced her to shut it down late last year. Yet, Green Galactic continues to thrive and move forward because of Hasty's tenacity and positive attitude. "I try to enjoy every moment of every day," she says. "I'm really good at knowing who I am and what makes me happy." And location still plays a big role in that happiness.

"I can't tell you how much I love LA. It's still this awesome, magical place for me," Hasty says. "And it has the most diverse topography ever. It feels so right, I couldn't imagine being anywhere else. I feel like a true Angeleno."

### www.greengalactic.com

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?
Late-night eateries like Vine, 1235 Vine, just south of Fountain. They serve fondue and other items until midnight. Nova Express at 426 N. Fairfax-open till 4AM, Electric Lotus, 4656 Franklin Ave. at Vermont, serves food until midnight on weekinghts and until 1 am. on weekends.

BACK IN THE DAY, WHEN THE WORD 'CLASH' MEANT ENOUGH TO BE CAPITALIZED, SYNTHESIZER PLAYERS AND OTHERS IN LOS ANGELES HAD PUNK IN THEIR HEADS AND NOISE IN THEIR HEARTS. AS JIMMY CARTER GAVE WAY TO RONALD REAGAN, THESE SOUTHLAND MAVENS MADE THE FUTURE HAPPEN.

Some think today's laptop/glitch performances and disco punk represent the first blends of electronic music and punk attitude, but recent history proves otherwise. Take a trip back to late-'70s/early-'80s Los Angeles, where alienated musicians with keyboard fetishes battled smog, glam and rock conformity to forge a sonic future, before it went all hardcore punk.

The first thing to remember about synthpunk is to forget about "synth punk." Formed in 1977 by late genre-bending lead singer Tomata Du Plenty, the guitarless, synth-and-drums driven Screamers were (along with the Germs and the Weirdos) one of LA's first *punk* bands, period—one with a large local following. Spiky-headed Du Plenty vamped and barked maniacally live as the band crunched and bleeped through way-catchy noise-stompers like "Magazine Love" and "122 Hours of Fear." Although they tragically never recorded a studio album before breaking up in 1981, the Screamers' live gigs and demos have been collected in releases on the Xeroid label (www.xeroidrecords.com).

On a similar tip were Nervous Gender, formed in 1978 by proto-queercore synth-men/vocalists Edward Stapleton and the late Gerardo Vasquez, and augmented at points by butch futurist guitarist/singer Phranc and an eight-year-old drummer named Sven. Powered by solid punk grooves, brutal keyboard noise and the lyrical fall-out from their founders' strict Catholic upbringings, NG terrorized SF and LA punk venues, recorded the astonishing, still-available album *Music From Hell* on Subterranean Records, and were joined at points by luminaries like Germs drummer Don Bolles, Electric Company's Brad Laner and the Moreland brothers from Wall of Voodoo. Looking back, Stapleton notes that the era's rock music "suffered from severe sameness and corporate backing. NG

was our attempt to break through the complacency to elicit an emotional response from our audience and ourselves." He offers material from both NG and his current Hindi-tinged electronic/spoken word project Kali's Thugs at www.theoretical.com/nervoushome.html.

Self-described by guitarist Michael Uhlenkott as "just science nerds from the [suburban San Fernando] Valley trying to be interesting, and with any luck, cool," four-piece band Monitor-part of the World Imitation art collective-offered an austere, mysterious tone to the scene's more bombastic proceedings. Though basically a guitar band with keyboards, Monitor's intricate blend of moody, eclectic pop and opaque electronic prefigured post-punk's legacy; the 7" single and eponymous album they released before their 1981 break-up are both out of print, but set for re-release alongside a book on the band. Keep your eye on off-shape.org/HTML/endworld.html.

Directly inspired by the above bands (alongside moments like industrial heroes Throbbing Gristle's penultimate show in LA), Brad Laner (www.bradlaner.com) started his rotating noise review Debt of Nature in 1981 at the ripe old age of 14. After five cassette albums and opening slots for Wall of Voodoo, Sonic Youth and Swans, Laner eventually left his DoN guise behind for various musical adventures, including his recently resuscitated major-label '90s noise-pop group Medicine and his solo electronic project Electric Company. Says the Valley boy, "[In LA's early '80s,] it seemed almost more anti-social than punk to use electronic sounds, like they were even more threatening because they would get up the nose of the average hippie music listener." Laner also treasured the scene's accessibility: "You'd just get a couple pieces of gear by any method, get together any loose conglomeration of people, call it a band, have a show, have some people show up, and it was immediately legitimate. The whole prevailing DIY aesthetic was so empowering, especially being a kid."

Special thanks to Damien Ramsey at the essential www.synthpunk.org; Antonio Beecroft at www.offshape.org; and Messrs. Stapleton, Uhlenkott and Laner, and Laurie O'Connell for their reminisces.

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET? Brad Laner: Monitor



THE LA ISSUE Words Heath K. Hignight Image Jessica Miller Words Brolin Winning Image Jessica Miller

### PLUG RESEARCH IS THE LITTLE INDIE THAT COULD.

Launched in 1994 as a leftfield electronic outfit, Plug Research has done a remarkable job of expanding its horizons, not only remaining afloat, but pushing domestic experimental electronic music beyond its comfortable confines. Based in LA, Plug Research's influences run in different directions than similar small labels on the East Coast or in Europe, and according to founder Allen Avanessian, that's made all the difference in the world.

"When the label first started, we were just releasing mainly very experimental limited twelve-inches and minimal techno," remarks Avanessian, his words lit up with excitement. "We are definitely not about that anymore. We just needed to move on and explore new things and have been very excited-and also having lots of

One of the innovations that helped reposition Plug Research outside the snobbish confines of IDM and other micro-defined genres is the hybrid aesthetics of hip-hop and nontraditional digital programming. According to Avanessian, it behooved Plug Research to go in this direction, in part due to hip-hop's unique influence and its growing cultural importance. "We released our first hip-hop record in '97 by the Shadow Huntaz, produced by Trash Aesthetic," he notes. "That was almost six years ago, and now electronic labels all over the world are releasing alternative hip-hop. It was a taboo for us back then, but we always felt that it would eventually catch on and set some sort of trend. And it did in a big way!"

Of course, Plug Research still releases experimental electronic music; last year's Low Res album, Blue Ramen, was all about sultry free-form jazz and loungy digital effects. But what's driving Plug Research lately is indie-rock/folk/electronic fusions like Dntel, Daedelus and Soulo, all of whom have found critical success over the last two years thanks to Plug Research's efforts.

The year 2003 has also brought a sister label. "In the beginning of the year, Plug Research introduced a new offshoot called SoFa Disk," says Avanessian. "Our first release on SoFa Disk was an original contemporary Afrobeat record by Najite Olokun Prophecy, who is a godson of the late Fela Kuti and a student of his. It was a completely different venture personally, but African music is a really special thing for us. We really enjoyed producing this record, and are working very hard on a lot of other projects for SoFa Disk, which will include Najite as well as some '70s Afrobeat and Highlife reissues."

When asked about the importance of being based in LA, Avanessian says that he's not sure what it is. "I feel LA has a very strong influence in an unusual sort of way. People seem to disregard it at times, but you really can't discredit this city-it's rich in all forms of music, art and culture. The scene now is really strong, with people like the Dublab crew, labels like Stones Throw, Mush, Simbal Rec, and for the experimental heads, Phthalo. You can go out almost every night in LA to check out a show, in all genres of music, and there will always be a mixed crowd at these events. And the people attending all get into it. That's really the Plug Research aesthetic as a label. You can definitely mark us as 'The LA Label."

www.plugresearch.com

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?





### LEFT-FIELD EMCEE KEEPS YOU GUESSING.

As hip-hop continues to expand and evolve, musical boundaries and preconceived notions are torn down daily, thanks to a growing number of non-traditional artists unafraid to experiment with their sound. While some self-proclaimed purists may hate on these sonic rabble-rousers, those who tire of the same ol' same ol' are embracing cats that bring something truly different to the ever-crowded table. Enter Bizzart.

Born Arthur Arellanes III, Bizzart grew up in Southern California and started writing songs and poetry when he was 12. A classically trained actor, he was the focus of a 1999 documentary called Everybody's Mouth, which would also become the title of his debut album, released the following year on the forward-thinking Sounds Are Active label (home to acts like Create(!) and Soul-Junk). Flexing an unusual voice and dexterous cadences. Arellanes's unique steez straddles the line between spoken word, hip-hop and performance art, further punctuated by his bugged-out live show, which incorporates multiple costume changes and intergalactic throwdowns. For the uninitiated, Bizzart's style is difficult to describe and impossible to pigeonhole. "I usually tell people that I'm the male version of Björk, but I rap," he explains.

Working with an assortment of up-and-coming producers, including Accident, Sam Justice and Alkalyne, Bizzart keeps busy recording, writing and performing as much as possible. Since his 2000 debut, he's released an EP entitled L.A. Approach, collaborated with other local artists, and played countless shows up and down the state, sharing bills with underground heavy-hitters like Latyrx and Atmosphere.

Though he still loves his hip-hop, Bizzart is a big fan of groups like Portishead and the Mars Volta, influences that are evident in his music. When asked about his dream collaboration, the Icelandic icon comes up once again. "She's so mythical, lovable and tough. I really enjoy her for how she portrays herself as an artist, and she's a mom! She should be voted woman of the year."

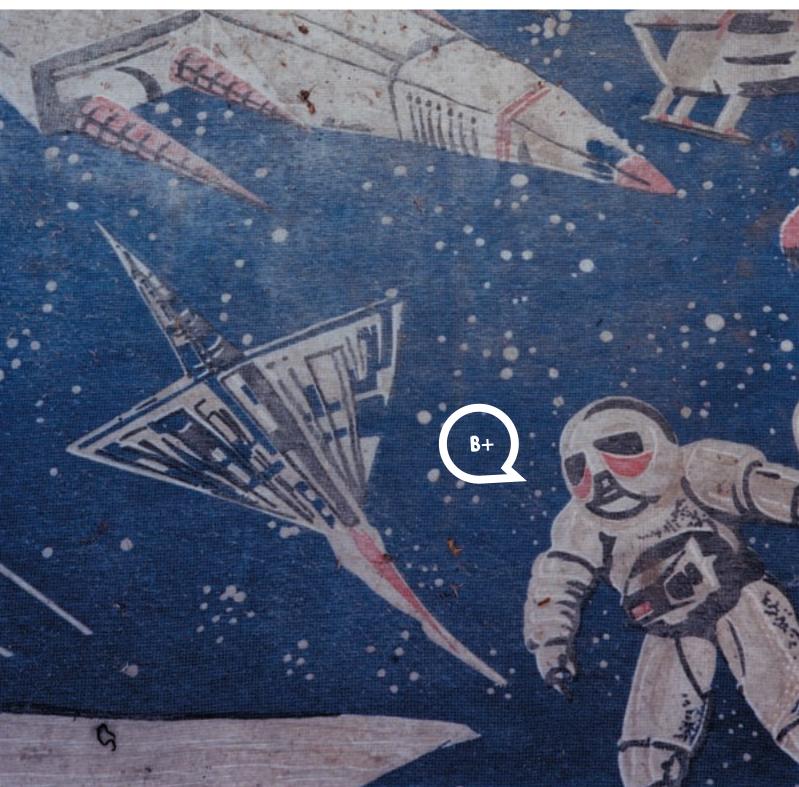
While his unorthodox rhyme style and theatrical approach may fly over the heads of some, Bizzart keeps it moving, delivering next-level verbals to open-minded audiences searching for something original. He's currently working on a new EP, which also features Busdriver and AWOL One, and putting the finishing touches on his latest full-length, EARdrung, set to drop this fall on Sounds Are Active.

www.soundsareactive.com

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?
The Knitting Factory, a venue that isn't too known to the general public. And that's a good thing.



THE LA ISSUE Words David J. Weissberg Image B+



HERE'S A SNAPSHOT: WE PULLED B+ CA.K.A. BRIAN CROSSO, PHO-TOGRAPHER, FILMMAKER AND ALL AROUND HIP-HOP FAKIR, ASIDE FOR HIS VISUAL TAKE ON LOS ANGELES.

Quite possibly our generation's William Claxton, Los Angeles photographer B+ has, for quite some time, been documenting the thin line that unites hip-hop and jazz. People on the other side of his lens have included the likes of Madlib, Saul Williams, Paul Humphrey, Money Mark, Galt MacDermot and DJ Shadow, to name a select few-the list is as intriguing as it exhaustive. As with most photographers who can't keep still, he recently made a move into films with the critically acclaimed documentary Keepintime, in which he paired legendary jazz drummers like James Gadson with the likes of Cut Chemist and filmed what ensued. B+ is currently shooting the follow-up to that flick, entitled Brasilintime:Batucada com Discos, with classic drummers such as Wilson Das Neves, Mamao (Azymuth) and Joao Parahyba (Trio Mocoto) alongside Brazilian hip-hop DJ Nuts.

The LA Space Program. [As Quasimoto said:] "We've been out there in orbit, a lot further than the moon/ain't we, ain't we, just between you and me."

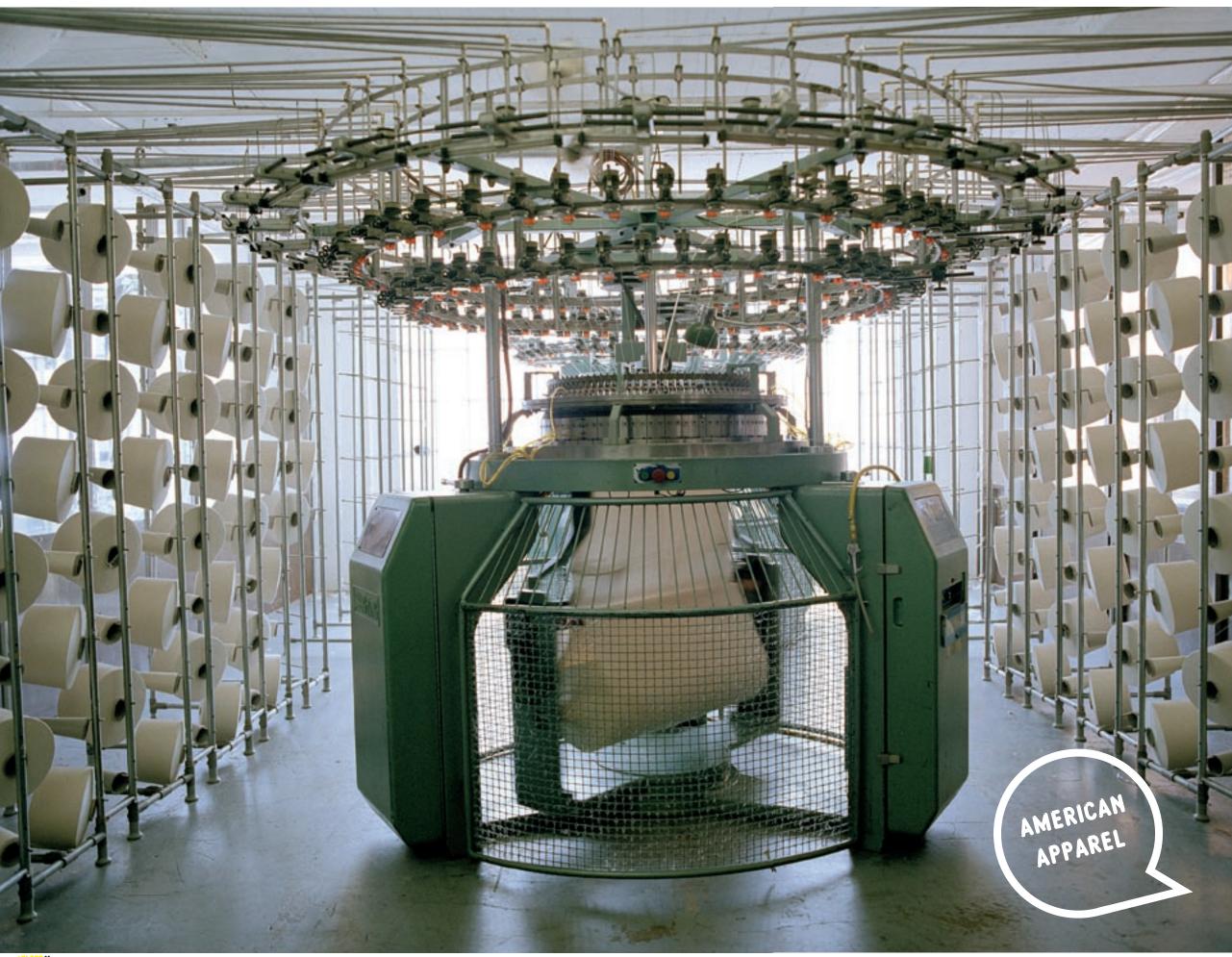
WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?
Great books for cheap at 331/3 Books on Alvarado and Sunset.

All City Beats (Columbus, OH) Amoeba (LA, SF, and Berkeley) Armand's (Philadelphia) Criminal Records (ATL) Dusty Groove (Chicago) Earwax (Brooklyn) Fat Beats (NY & LA) hiphopinfinity.com hiphopsite.com Mondo Kim's (NYC) Newbury Comics (MA) Open Mind (SF) sandboxautomatic.com thegiantpeach.com Turntable Lab (NYC) Undergroundhiphop.com CAROLINE DISTRIBUTION STONES THROW RECORDS www.stonesthrow.com

THE J DILLA-MADLIB COLLAB

100

THE LA ISSUE Words Vivian Host Image Jessica Miller



### T.W.A., NOT THE FAILED AIRLINE, BUT T-SHIRTS WITH ATTITUDE, THE UNSPO-KEN CREDO OF THE MANUFACTURING REVOLUTIONARIES AT AMERICAN APPAREL.

"Who wants to wear a baggy, extra-large t-shirt into a party?," asks Dov Charney, rhetorically. "How many people are going, 'Loser! He's not getting any pussy tonight.'? Fashion is sex, you fucking animals!"

Charney, founder of the wildly popular American Apparel company, has built his enterprise on the theory that young, sexy people want soft, form-fitting clothes. And he's not afraid to tell you so. Charney is what you get when you replace the balding, 40-something Hanes executive with a tshirt-obsessed hipster-he's a wild-eyed, wildhaired, screaming-prone madman who oversees every detail at his factory in the heart of downtown LA, from garment cuts to the photos and drawings that line the walls.

Charney started the business at age 16, when the entrepreneurial Quebec native went to boarding school in the US and became taken by the look and feel of American t-shirts. This turned out to be more than a passing fancy-Charney ended up living in the Carolinas for eight years, learning every aspect of the t-shirt manufacturing business, from equipment to marketing.

When it came time to start American Apparel, Charney resolved to do things differently, eschewing outsourcing for a vertically integrated factory where everything except the garment dyeing is done on site. The two block-long pink factory is an industrial hive where cotton thread spins on gigantic turbines, the design department turns out samples as fast as they can think up an idea, and row upon row of workers churn out one t-shirt every minute and a half. Charney-surrounded by black & white press shots of '60s Pan Am stewardesses and photos of Jamaican dancehall girls-presides over it all.

"My costs are cheaper than a prison in China, because I control the quality inside my building," he rattles on the phone line. "If the factory is in China, how they hell are you going to control the quality? And when things are close to you, you're less likely to be exploited than when they're far away. You don't steal from workers you have to face all the time."

Charney has revolutionized the t-shirt business, using real people instead of models in ads, abolishing sweatshop conditions for workers and integrating organic cotton into the manufacturing process. But at the end of the day, his success has been predicated on making the t-shirts that people want to wear religiously. "Clothes were tighter in the late '60s and early '70s," he says. "America was younger, and that's about to come back. And when the cultural/political/industrial/sexual evolution happens, [American Apparel] is going to explode. It's about the style of our time, and we want to be the uniform."

### WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

WHAI'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

Dov Charney: Boyle Heights and living on LA's East Side. You get hardwood floors, and it's cool living, not infiltrated by corporations. There's 
only one Starbucks in Echo Park. In my neighborhood, you can get cof-

THE LA ISSUE Words Carleton Curtis Words Daniel Siwek Image Jessica Miller



# THE HEAD OF LA'S EMPEROR NORTON RECORDS COMMANDS YOU TO LISTEN

Car crashes take on a different meaning in Los Angeles than in other cities. In LA, they're almost rites of passage; you just haven't *lived* until your ribs have been crushed against your own steering wheel. Steve Pross, president of LA's Emperor Norton Records, knows this first hand; he was involved in a mash-up just days before our interview. As I spoke with the loquacious commander-in-chief (Steve hates the word "president"), he cheerfully answers each of my questions despite unrelenting pain and the occasional muscle spasm. "This is an incredibly fun job," he wheezes. Indeed, it's good to be the king.

Like its namesake Joshua Abraham Norton, a San Francisco eccentric who appointed himself emperor of the United States in 1859, the Emperor Norton label also bumped into its own special meaning of "success." Building from its core catalogue of off-kilter beats (Pepe Deluxé, Takako Minekawa) and ethereal soundtracks for the

Coppola kids (*Virgin Suicides*, CQ), the six-employee imprint began signing acts like Felix Da Housecat, Miss Kitten and Ladytron around the new millennium.

Then came the electroclash explosion. "We had the good fortune, or misfortune, of putting out those records after the UK style press started freaking out," says Pross of ENR's newfound celebrity. Now grouped together with labels like DJ Hell's Gigolo and Tiga's Turbo Recordings, Emperor Norton became synonymous with the abominably conceived genre.

And then, poof. Just like last season's Prada pumps, electroclash was left for dead. "The Mount Sims record is our most regrettable release, because we didn't market them correctly," sighs Pross. "It came out during the electroclash backlash, and since Larry Tee didn't have any records out, people bashed Mount Sims."

But like any resilient label, Pross and ENR moved on, ignoring the electro mania invented by the press. For devotees of the label, which Pross helped found in 1998 with partner Peter Getty

(yup, of the Getty family), there was no grudge, no coup-just an appreciation for the label's anything-but-fickle philosophy. By plucking artists from faraway places like Germany, Norway and Japan, Emperor Norton achieved true balance and originality, according to Pross. "If an artist is recording something that is already a current trend, then they're hopelessly behind," he grunts in regards to the plagiarism afflicting the industry and LA in particular.

Pross and Emperor Norton are closing out 2003 with some strong contenders. A new studio album from Felix, a Ladytron mix album, and the sound-track for Sofia Coppola's new film, Lost in Translation (which features Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson) are all dropping around the new year. "We're always trying to figure out what's next," heaves Pross, amid another jolt of pain. Airbags, Steve. Pony up for a car with airbags.

www.emperornorton.com

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

Mo' Better Meaty Meat Burger on Pico Boulevard. It takes 20 minutes to get your hamburger, but they're incredible.

# DJ VALIDA AND HER SUNDAY CLUB'S MUSICAL MISSION ARE FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE.

DJ/promoter Valida Carroll is quick to point out that she wasn't seeking refugee status when she emigrated to LA from Sarajevo, Bosnia, but came to fulfill a scholarship at UCLA. "It's not just bombs over there," she notes. "It's got real flavor and nightlife. I still go there every year and throw a big party, only it's a little harder to find parking than it is in LA."

Despite her Eastern European upbringing, Carroll's an Angeleno for sure, living in Venice and holding down one of the most righteous weekly club spots in town. Proper happens every Sunday, and it's one of the very few places in LA to hear broken beat, Afrobeat, Brazilian, drum & bass, hiphop, dancehall and, Carroll adds, "Salsa, every once and a while."

For her masters thesis, Carroll set out to make a documentary on dance, but ended up with *Concentric Beats*, a film that will eventually go down as one of the defining motion pictures on the global drum & bass scene. While Carroll was out hyping *Concentric*, word spread that she was a talented DJ as well, and before long she was getting booked to play 2-step in side-rooms at local haunts like the drum & bass weekly Respect.

When it came time to establish Proper at Star Shoes (a sophisticated, rectangular-shaped bar housed in a mock vintage shoe store on the

starry sidewalk of Hollywood Blvd.), Carroll looked to promoter dMarie from San Francisco's Eklektic for inspiration. "Women add just the right touch, and I knew that dMarie handled her shit really well."

Carroll's a quick study, because, in addition to respected residents from the Proper Crew/Sumosound posse (Omus, Hilo, International Playboy Zen and Rashida, alongside MCs Kemst and Ghost on the mic), Proper has been known to pull in some big guests. Imports like Jazzanova, Vikter Duplaix and the Bugz in the Attic drop by, and local heavyweights like Peanut Butter Wolf, Madlib, Jun, John Beltran and John Tejada are staples as well.

"People come to flex their dancing skills," says Carroll regarding the club's rapid ascent, noting that the free admission doesn't hurt either. "Nine out of ten times, there's a [breakdance] circle, and it doesn't have to be hip-hop-they'll do it to house!"

Proper correctly reflects this city, a populace of strange bedfellows blissfully locking legs, hips and hands together in what lost angels The Eagles dubbed the "Hollywood Waltz."

www.concentricbeats.com, www.sumosound.com/proper

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

Valida: Definitely Jamal's secret Jamaican speakeasy in the back of a house on Gower. Too bad your writer is keeping the address a secret!



THE LA ISSUE Words Ron Nachmann Image Jessica Miller



### DOWNTEMPO PIONEER TOM CHASTEEN DUBS UP SUNNY LA-LA LAND.

Talk LA downtempo and you're talking Tom Chasteen. Fittingly raised in Woodstock, New York, Chasteen met Chicago hippie Mike Kandel while attending CalArts in 1986. They DJed the art-opening circuit and performed as the High Lonesome Sound, which Chasteen describes as "30 turntables playing records that had been smashed and glued back together, and keyboard sounds and feedback." Chasteen and Kandel started the Exist Dance label in 1991, releasing seminal downtempo classics like "They Came in Peace" under their Tranquility Bass guise and breakbeat hits like "Champion Sound" as High Lonesome Sound System. Chasteen left the label in '94 for a sabbatical to Arizona away from the music industry. He returned to LA, resuscitated Exist Dance and began producing/dubmixing for eight-piece dub band Future Pigeon. He also started the strictly rootsy Dub Club (Wednesdays at The Echo, 1822 Sunset Blvd. in Echo Park), which has seen live shows by Adrian Sherwood, Mikey Dread and Scientist. With house singles like "Caramel Blonde" and eclectic

EPs on tap for Exist Dance, the Southland sky's the limit for Chasteen.

### XLR8R: What made you start Exist Dance?

Tom Chasteen: The usual: we were making good music and didn't want to shop demos to the majors. Part of it also stemmed from how tiny independent labels sprouted in the rave scene.

### XLR8R: Are you conscientious of having developed a "West Coast sound" in the early '90s?

TC: When the Hardkiss guys started putting out records, a lot of our dynamics became identified as a "San Francisco sound." In some ways, it actually fits better in San Francisco than here-maybe we came up in the wrong town! But as Mike and I started this, we were completely into '60s psychedelia. It's what we liked about raves, and the records were supposed to be part of the soundtrack to the big gatherings and freak-outs. We were into black dance music-hip-hop, go-go and stuff like that-and on the other hand, we liked really psychedelic, cosmic music. I think I'm still trying to marry those two sides.

### XLR8R: Is Dub Club part of that marriage?

TC: Dub Club is strictly reggae roots-no hip-hop or trip-hop-which keeps it focused. I think, Very few people stick to that, because it's difficult. It's slow, the records are old, and the sound quality is fucked up, so it's not exactly easy to rock it. But my philosophy of playing the records is that if people could dance to them in the '70s, they can do it now. The human body hasn't changed that much.

### XLR8R: What is about LA that made you return from Arizona, and what keeps you here?

TC: This is where my friends are; I like this city a lot. I guess it's a cliché, but I like the multiculturalism of it: it's a real capital-of-the-world type of city. y'know? There are so many different, endless little neighborhoods-the longer you live here, the more you find. At the Dub Club, we get a real racial mix, a Black/white/Asian/Latino blend. It really reflects the city.

www.attheecho.con

### WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?:

I don't know if it's really a secret, but Preachin' the Blues (KPFK 90.7, Thursday nights 11-1) is my favorite local radio program. The host, Ed Archer ("The Geezer") is always playing great records I never knew existed, and his casual hosting style is a beautiful antidote to main-

### CHECK THE COLLECTIVE THAT BRINGS A SPIRITUAL FOCUS TO THEIR UNDERGROUND JAZZ. HIP-HOP AND REGGAE EVENTS.

It's almost 2AM as I arrive at Fifth Street Dicks, a small free-jazz storefront venue in the Leimert Park district of South Central Los Angeles that was ground-zero for bebop jam sessions in the '60s and '70s. Inside, painter Tony Black's African-themed canvasses drape the walls, DJ Sacred is crammed in the corner playing a Burning Spear track, and Michelle Eubanks-Myers greets me at the door with a warm "hello, welcome to Juiu."

For the past decade, the Soul Children collective has produced some of LA's most unique underground music events, ranging from Brown Rice & BBQ-their all-night jazz, hip-hop and hot-food gathering held in various hair salons-to Juju, their longest running night. Tall and stoic DJ Al Jackson has always been one of the central figures in the crew, but he's quick to point out the contributions of all six members, including artist Black; DJs Sacred, Rome DeVase and Alex Burley (a.k.a. DJ One); and producer Eubanks-Myers.

"We're a group of like-minded individuals that care about preserving jazz foundations and DJ culture," explains Jackson. The collective has gained a reputation for transforming some highly unconventional spaces into comfortable, spiritual music environments.

"We started out doing no-cover music events with [our own] food in cafés," says Eubanks-Myers. "Then we rented a house-we called it the Funky Mansionthen a warehouse..."

"On Crenshaw and 57th, no less!" says Sacred emphatically, referring to the area's gang-banger reputation in the early- and mid-'90s. Brown Rice & BBQ appeared sporadically after its 1991 launch, gaining a following through word of mouth and the promotional efforts of their friend Derek Moss. "We wouldn't be where we are if it wasn't for Derek," states the soft-spoken DeVase. "He helped

popularize what we were doing."

Tragically, just as Soul Children events first gained momentum in the early '90s, Moss was killed in a petty armed robbery. But the collective have incorporated even this adversity into their mission. "The music and things that inspire us, a lot of those people are someplace else now, without bodies. But we're still connected," suggests Sacred. "What they left for us is [something] for us to share and [give] to people that come after us."

Throughout the '90s Soul Children continued their low-key weekly, monthly and one-off events, and experienced something of a rebirth in 2001 with the launch of their bi-weekly event Juju. The party, known for its variety of music styles, typically offers a selection of the new (JayDee, Pete Rock, Goapele), the classic (Prince, Minnie Ripperton, Roy Ayers) and the just plain sublime (Fela Kuti, Augustus Pablo, Roni Size). Homemade food, fresh juices, board games, couch areas and Black's large-scale paintings add to the unique social atmosphere.

In a metropolis of many neighborhoods and racial divisions, Soul Children events have brought previously Hollywood-centered jazz, soul and progressive hiphop nights back to the African-American community in the Crenshaw district, and brought the Hollywood club crowd with them. Moreover, the Soul Children have both kept South Central's jazz traditions alive and introduced a younger audience to the music. "When we were [at Fifth Street Dicks] in Leimert, a lot of the elders from the community that would be out and about on the nights of Juju would come by and acknowledge our presence and our work," says Sacred proudly.

"The end result is a product of love," says Jackson. "We were never in this for the money. The spiritual aspect of what we do overshadows the material aspect." Juiu and events hotline: 310-407-3549.

WHAT'S LA BEST-KEPT SECRET?

What 5 th best-her (secret) [Collectively]: The record (vinyl) culture, the beat junkies and people who know their vinyl; Medusa; the art and music culture that remains beneath the surface.



THE LA ISSUE

Words Scott Thill Image Christopher Woodcack



# ALTHOUGH SOON TO BE VACATED, THE HOME OF STONES THROW RECORDS FOUNDER PEANUT BUTTER WOLF WILL BE REMEMBERED AS EXOTIC ENOUGH TO BE ON ANY STAR MAP.

This is the story of a bunch of beat-miners who shacked up in an eccentric's house somewhere on Griffith Park Boulevard in LA to craft spliffed-out jams on their own label, in hopes of carving out a singular niche in a hip-hop game dominated by Bentleys, ice and thug lifers who buy flak jackets for their toddlers. Stones Throw Records might not roll off the tongue like Def Jam, but it's still early. While you're waiting, Chris "Peanut Butter Wolf" Manak, Eothen "Egon" Alapatt and Jeff Jank will be chilling at the Stones Throw co-op, bumping to Madlib's basement jams in the bomb shelter. See, the family that lives together, stays together. And even though the Stoners will be heading to a new office loft soon, working together in close quarters has been a tea party. Egon explains.

# XLR8R: What is it like working in the Stones Throw co-op environment?

Egon: Well, at first it was really scary. Wolf moved the company down from the Bay Area in 2000,

which is when I moved out to California and just graduated college. [Manak] basically said, "You have to move down here now, so tie up your stuff on the East Coast and let's get cracking." So I get out there and he's like, "Ok, this is Jeff. Jeff helped me move down here, but now he's just gonna stay here, we're all gonna live together and Jeff's gonna be the art designer for Stones Throw." We were in such close proximity that we had to work through our idiosyncrasies quickly.

### XLR8R: Do you ever get that sort of Real World: Stones Throw thing?

EA: Yeah, it happens all the time. But it works out. You know, it's a pretty big house, and we have our own little sections. Jeff and Chris and myself have bedrooms, and Madlib has a studio that he's always working out of. Jeff and Chris got the downstairs and I got the upstairs all to myself. But it's all gonna change though, because we got a big loft we just finished renovating and we're moving everything into that. They're putting the blinds up and dropping the telephone lines this week, and that's it. Except that Madlib [will keep] the studio in the bomb shelter. It's an actual bomb shelter in the house. I don't know if anybody ever told you that.

### XLR8R: What's the story?

EA: The guy who owned the house before our landlord renovated it was this completely bizarre dude who only built the house up to ground level on the side of a hill. He was convinced the bomb was gonna drop and he had to be prepared. I guess the guy got carted off by the state one day. Our landlord bought it, built this house, and left everything pretty much the way it was.

# XLR8R: Yeah. Since this is the LA issue, I wanted to get an idea of how you feel working in that town?

EA: LA probably has the most progressive hip-hop scene in the country right now. There's Dilated Peoples, Jurassic 5, Dr. Dre and Eminem, all that kind of stuff. But there's also an amazing amount of clubs and live performances. You'll have people that go to a Prefuse 73 show, then head over to the Root Down [club] on a Thursday night to hear Cut Chemist spin. You can see anything–Breakestra, Wildchild, he's always doing stuff in LA. You combine that with Busdriver and all those guys and you have an amazing hip-hop community that works together.

www.stonesthrow.com

### WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

Egon: Amazing little theaters like the Landmark Rialto in South Pasadena or the Silent Movie Theatre south of Melrose. You can catch the most amazing movies at a historic theater with a balcony built in 1920 for, like, four or five dollars.

# ACETALONE

"Acey's rhymes are consistently top-notch" vibe Magazine
"Acey's flow is on point as ever" XLRSR



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Features the hot single "Lost Your Mind" and the new single "Moonlit Skies" featuring Goapele both tracks produced by Rid2

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IN STORES OCTOBER 7th

"The Good Brothers" features tracks with:
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Aceyalone, Abstract Rude, Pep Love,
Ahmad, RJD2, Fat Jack, PMG,
Riddlore, Self Jupiter, Big Arch
and many others.



THE LA ISSUE
Words David J. Weissberg Image Jessica Miller Words Jon Weldon Image Jessica Miller



# SH 101, POLY 800, TB 303, ARP 2600, THE WASP. ARE THESE SECRET CODE WORDS OR MUSIC TO YOUR EARS? IF IT'S THE LATTER, THEN STEP INTO THE FUTURE-FUTURE MUSIC, THAT IS.

In the city of Hollywood, on the western portion of Sunset Boulevard, exists the self proclaimed "quitar district," its pavement worn thin by Poison, Whitesnake, Ratt and other Behind the Music stories waiting to happen. Smack in the middle, like an ink stain on Sammy Hagar's otherwise pristine satin jacket, is Future Music. A veritable Sanford and Son-style space for classic electronic gear from the '80s and earlier, the shop stocks drum machines, keyboards, rack mount effects and even odd, almost Geiger counter-like boxes with one switch. But knowledge is the rarer commodity that they stock, and it's given away freely. Curious which about which synth was used in Rhythm to Rhythm, or what went "bumpadabumpada" on "Blue Monday"? Or maybe how Kid A was put together, or how Adult. manages to keep it old school? The ears of Jack Waterson, Future Music's founder and his staff can name that gear from Twilight Zone to Four Tet, and all

refreshingly free of surly, this-is-just-my-day-job guitar-clerk attitude. Going on their fifth year, the outspoken Waterson tells it like it is.

### XLR8R: A Future philosophy?

Jack Waterson: I will stand on the statement that the next truly important movement in rock and roll will emerge from the electronic underground of today. This is the only scene that resembles the early days of punk in this country as it started to spread in the late '70s. Self-promoted shows and like-minded audience and artists are current signs of a healthy scene.

# XLR8R: Your staff seems fairly knowledgeable about electronic music both old and new.

JW: I have had the good fortune to surround myself with great people. I have to feel really comfortable with someone and I need to be familiar with him or her for some time. For instance, I don't need anyone that knows about guitars. They're boring and crude. Everybody knows about them. I've found that there are more people familiar with analog synths and related equipment than there were back in the day. The high prices of these goodies could crush a man back then.

# XLR8R: Being on Sunset Blvd. must bring in its fair share of oddities...

JW: It's an open-air asylum. We get a little bit of all walks of life. From crazy people I know by name to hookers that have no shame. Old Russian folks who talk to ghosts and junkies who just look lost. A constant stream of my old friends and some I don't want to see again. There is never a dull moment.

### XLR8R: And celebs?

JW: Since we are in Los Angeles, we get everyone. I deal with a lot of local celeb types, and, generally speaking, anyone who comes through the area on tour will drop by. I sell exotic equipment, so I find that most people of interest buy interesting things. The more obscure the better. I feel that it's my duty to protect those that buy from leaking out any info. I will say, however, that I can bore those most interested with these kinds of stories, and would be happy to do so in person. Come by! It's always an exchange of ideas and information. You never know who's hanging out.

www.futuremusiconline.com

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?
Paru's vegetarian restaurant on Sunset near Vermont.

### MUSH MASHES GENRES TO MAKE MASTERFUL MUSIC.

Mush Records is simply "American-made, avant-undergound, emo-Brit-blip-hop, downtempo free-jazz rap," according to Busdriver, the LA MC who's never short on words. Label co-owner Robert Curcio's thesis is more straightforward: "We're interested in that place where all the genres fit together...challenging music that doesn't fit into one category." Built on a shaky foundation of hip-hop, the Mushthetic depends equally on the spontaneity of free jazz, the blip-twitch of electronica, the confessional vulnerability of indie rock, and the worldly impulses of dub.

Of course, how can a label that has performed its own puddle-jumping through America be held down to anything but a melting pot of styles? Launched in Cincinnati, where they gathered and released material by members of Oakland's Anticon and Five Deez producer Fat Jon, Mush then drifted around the US, landing in New York and San Francisco before reaching their final, and apparently satisfying, destination of sunny Los Angeles.

"We knew from the time we moved to New York that we wanted to move to Los Angeles. A lot of the most influential artists in the hip-hop realm that we were listening to were from LA," Curcio notes, while citing both the city's impeccable weather and co-owner Cindy Roché's familial connections as the major lures of Los Angeles.

Everything started with Doseone and Boombip's *Circle* album, a grinding, spacy, Joycean hip-hop release, and the cLOUDDEAD 10" single series (also featuring Doseone), which sublimely searched the hinterlands of poetry and rhythm.

Mush has honed its vision into a unique album-creating process, while looking to the outer edges of LA's already amorphous hip-hop underground for new artists. "There are two ways a deal happens with Mush," Curcio explains. "One is that an artist shows up with a finished product. The other, more prominent, way is to set up a record to be made specifically for us—made in a specific time period and by a specific producer. We try to make albums that are very album-based."

The rest is left up to the artists, as with *The Weather* by MCs Busdriver and Radioinactive and producer Andre Asmar's debut *Race to the Bottom.* "We approached Radioinactive and Busdriver and told them to find a producer," Curcio recalls in regards to *The Weather.* "They were very careful and took a long time, to finally pick Daedelus."

Now that Mush is quietly established in Los Angeles, they continue to search the far corners for more "emo-Brit-blip-hop". This fall finds them releasing brooding breakbeat albums by Omid and Villain Accelerate, and new material from Austin's indie-electronica group Her Space Holiday.

www.mushrecords.com

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET? Swinghouse Rehearsal Studio.



THE LA ISSUE Words Vivian Host Image Jessica Miller Words Rob Geary Image Jessica Miller



### LA DEEP HOUSE MAVEN REVEALS THE MECHANICS OF MORE.

Glendale-based DJ and producer Tony Watson says that right now he's "landing one plane and about to take off in another." The arriving flight is the deep house/jazzy beats club night More, which Watson ran for three years at the beloved Gabah club in Hollywood. Like many of the best ideas in LA, More was born over lunch sometime in late 1999, during which Watson and mates were "just talking about the lack of a spiritual, soulful house music vibe in Los Angeles. The vibe we were looking for was like the Paradise Garage, free-form," he says. "I had just come from Body and Soul, so there was a fire lit under my ass, too. We just asked ourselves, "Why not?""

More's Friday nights of soulful house hinged on Watson's energetic, "give-it-my-all" sets, and soon the night went weekly, bringing in guest DJs from around the country. That popularity eventually earned More the dreaded status of "institution," so Watson decided to pull the plug while the night was still strong. "I figured if we're going to end it, let's go out on a high note. Our last night was one of the most amazing. [But] everyone there was like, 'Why are you ending it?' And I was like, 'Man, I haven't seen you for two months, that's why!"

Before that bittersweet end, though, Watson was recognized by the *LA Weekly*'s readership, receiving the 2002 Best DJ (Selector) award over high-pro-

file competition that included Marques Wyatt and Doc Martin. "I think they focused on what I did in that time, since then a lot of those guys were traveling. The recognition's truly appreciated, but I'm really doing this for myself."

Watson is taking that DIY ethic back to the bedroom studio and his once-dormant independent Mekanic label. "Passages," a soulful, melodic house epic, was picked up for release by numerous compilations. Like his success with More, the temptation was there to just ride that success forever. "The phone calls would not stop...but everyone wanted 'Passages' again, or something just like it. I was impressed at first, but it got to a point where I just stopped answering my phone."

Watson's recent productions as Project Sandro carry the same warm groove as "Passages," but aspects of breakbeat drum-programming and ambient keyboards often take center stage. Watson attributes this to childhood exposure to LA's diverse music and his current affiliations with a range of crews, from Wax's techno heads to neo-soul/hip-hop label Cashmere Sounds. "I like the fact that I can be down with everybody and erase all the boundaries, the rules, the politics. I can hang out with whomever I want, play at their party, and do what I do. At the end of the day, it's just a party."

www.mekanic.com

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

The abundance of talent, soul, dedication and passion that exists in the city. Musically, there are so many talented musicians/singers, producers, DJs, MC's-l'm talking about all genres and styles.

### TALKIN' SHIT AND GETTING SUED IS JUST ANOTHER DAY'S WORK FOR THE MUCK-RAKERS OF BUDDYHEAD.COM.

The guys who run Buddyhead look like they were airlifted from a Mudhoney concert circa 1992 and dropped, unsuspecting, in the middle of Hollywood. There's lanky Travis, with his sad, stoner eyes and a constant stream of "I dunnos" issuing from his mouth, and Aaron, all black, stringy hair and sarcastic asides. You get the feeling they use the word "sucks" a lot.

The pair met in 1997, when Aaron's high-school band rolled through Travis's Idaho hometown and, by his admission, "played on a fucked-up shitty punk rock tour where I was the only one who didn't think they sucked."

"We were a good combination of Travis's wideeyed 'this is good, this is fun' attitude, and my thinking that everything sucks and people suck," coos Aaron.

Resolutely steering clear of Los Angeles's plastic

glamour has always been part of the pair's pregrunge punk rock ethos, which drives their immensely popular Buddyhead.com website. Since 1998, the e-zine has been a repository for the pair's music minutiae, featuring interviews with obscure bands and artists, celebrity gossip, and the wildly popular scams section, where readers write in with tips for shoplifting and evading traffic tickets when running those pesky camera stoplights. It's also caused the pair more than their fair share of trouble.

"When I was growing up, people in the punk rock community were using fanzines to say whatever they wanted to say," says Aaron, "but they were only reaching 200 or 300 people. To me, that's what punk rock is. But for some reason, when we did that on the Internet and it was available for millions of people to read, all of a sudden it was so shocking. If we knew something that was kind of outrageous about some celebrity, and it was someone that we felt deserved to get jabbed a little bit, we'd write it. And people would be freaking out about it."

The duo's penchant for fake interviews and allthe-gossip-not-fit-to-print has saddled them with lawsuits from Courtney Love and Fred Durst, death threats from Good Charlotte, and, at one point, an ass-kicking from the lead singer of the Transplants.

Although the adversity has made the Buddyhead guys even more determined to do whatever they want, according to Aaron, the duo is currently putting most of their effort into developing their far-left-of-center record label, whose acts include the Icarus Line, Your Enemies Friends, goth punks Radio Vago, and shock-rapper Shat, who is fond of scatalogical song titles like "Shit on Her Tits." Travis is also working on a compilation called *Gimme Skelter*, while the two prepare a Buddyhead Records compilation, and a DVD and book of content from the website. Call them stoners, call them cynics, but don't call them slackers.

### ww.buddyhead.com

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

Travis: Us.

Aaron: There's actually cool people here, and a lot of good bands here, like 400 Blows, The Fallen, the Warlocks and the bands on our label.



THE LA ISSUE Words David J. Weissberg Image Jessica Miller



### *1-UP* MAY SPELL "GAME OVER" FOR VIDEO GAME MAGAZINES AS WE KNOW

On one hand you could say that 1-Up magazine, Raina Lee's 8-bit celebration of video game culture, started over a year ago; on the other, you could say it has been in the works for much longer. "I started playing video games because my parents owned a Numero Uno pizza store," enthuses Lee, "and they always had arcade games in the front. They'd give me a sack of quarters and hoped it would shut me up for a while. Little did they know they only fed the

Indeed. While a two-color, silk-screened, handassembled video game magazine containing no tips, no tricks, no Tekken or tits may not jibe with the X-Box set, in three short issues 1-Up has managed to cover that tactile world on the other side of the screen to the tune of about 6000 copies. Features range from feminist critiques of Nintendo games, to articles on video game piracy in China, to endless ruminations on the good old days (the

'80s, of course).

Not forgetting the visual orientation of its readership, 1-Up is peppered with old console schematics and instruction books, video game reviews and drawings from Lee's childhood, as well as illustrations and comics from noted LA artists like Martin Cendreda and John Pham. We dragged Raina, kicking and screaming (and making beeping noises), away from her game console long enough to talk about her favorite subject.

### XLR8R: As a woman in a male-dominated video game world, do you see yourself as an outsider to game culture or part of the mix?

Raina Lee: I am no different than any other video game fan, except as a woman I get a lot of doubletakes. A girl who plays video games? Boys always used to ask if I had a brother-I don't-who taught me how to play. Puh-leaze! A girl can learn on her own! Also, I don't see myself as a girl gamer who wants to be just as macho as the boys. I'm here to call boys in the gaming industry on their offensive shit! Like who the fuck thought of BMX XXX?

### XLR8R: Where do video games fit into society?

RL: They are an expressionistic medium like film, television or art. Video games let you imagine improbable situations (jumping over barrels, a 720 to nose grind, escaping plasma grenades) and let you practice to perfection. They may not let you right the wrongs in your life the way Woody Allen does in his films, but they are damn fun.

### XLR8R: Are there specific characteristics to LA video game culture, or is it pretty much universal? RL: Video games are a universal superforce, infecting idle-fingered children worldwide, so I don't think the culture is specific to LA. But it did give bored Angeleno kids a purpose: to beat the high score, to

avenge prior defeats, and to find the triforce. And the colors are pretty, too.

WHAT'S LA BEST-KEPT SECRET? Musha Restaurant (in the cities of Torrance and Santa Monica).

Japanese-style tapas!



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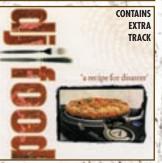




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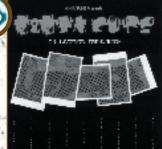


DJ FOOD - JAZZ BREAKS VOL. 4



DJ FOOD - RECIPE FOR DISASTER DJ FOOD - JAZZ BREAKS VOL. 5





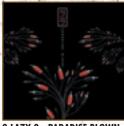
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FUNKI PORCINI - LOVE PUSSYCATS & CARWRECKS 9 LAZY 9 - PARADISE BLOWN





9 LAZY 9 - ELECTRIC LAZYLAND

UP BUSTLE & OUT - ONE COLOUR REFLECTS ANOTHER

THE LA ISSUE Words David J. Weissberg Image Jessica Miller Words Chris Muniz Image Jessica Miller



### IS IT LA'S AWESOME ART CLIMATE OR JUST THE WEATHER? DOWNTOWN'S SIX-SPACE GALLERY WILL HAPPILY TAKE BOTH.

The prevailing logic about LA is that no one is actually from here, and that the city's energy is fueled by wide-eyed out-of-towners high on both opportunity and the knowledge that, as in New York, you can make it here-plus get a little sun in the process.

When sixspace gallery's Caryn Coleman and Sean Bonner decided to make the jump from Chicago to downtown Los Angeles, was it the veritable clash of iconoclasm in LA's postmodern steel cathedrals that led them here? Or the cultural troposphere ripe with the cause of pushing artistic dialogue? "We came here," reveals Caryn, "because of the weather, and because we're interested in the

West Coast art scene. Mainly weather."

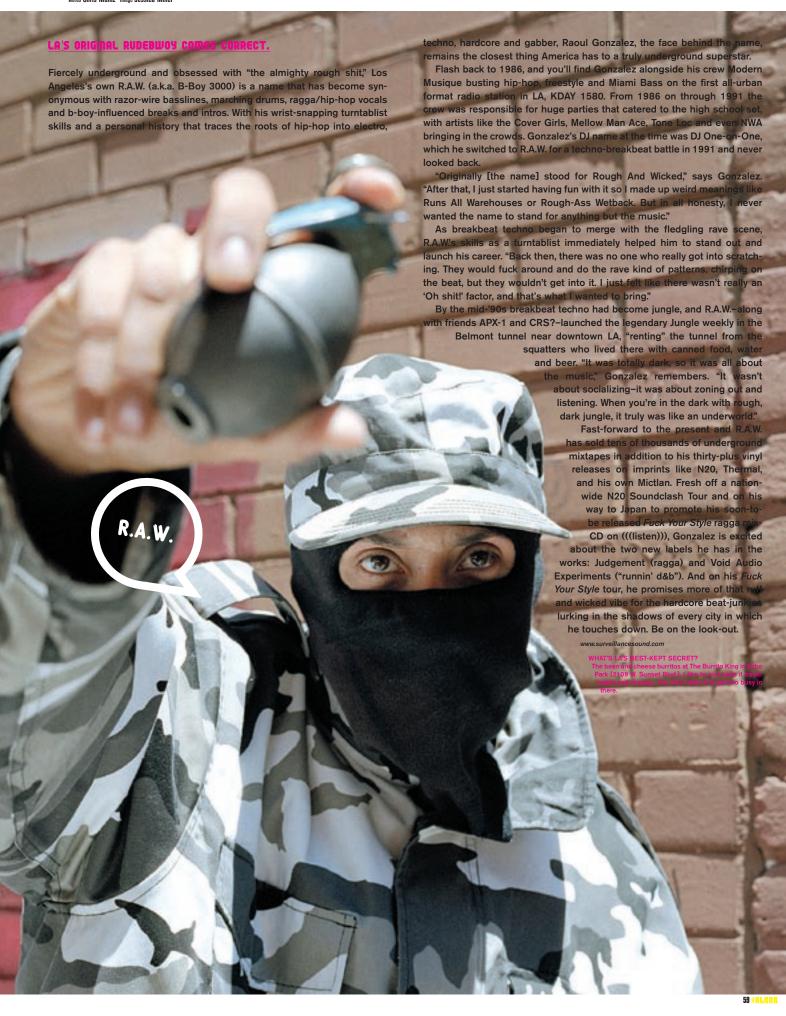
If this affirms a certain corn-fed modesty, then you're halfway there. When you visit sixspace, you're far more likely to be greeted by Lebowski, their five-pound miniature dobi, than any Mary Boone-style coldness, especially since Coleman and Bonner aren't hogtied to any single genre.

Like multicolored Tetris blocks falling into place, graffiti artists like FAFI and Shepard Fairey exhibit at sixspace along with more commercial illustrators like Seonna Hong. The chaos of Glen E. Friedman's photography can be housed under the same high ceiling as Dalek's chimerical "monkeys" without the gallery seeming even a dab self-conscious.

Sixspace could rest on these names alone, but that hasn't stopped them from assembling Cruel and Unusual, their biggest show to date. A benefit to raise awareness about the West Memphis Three, it pairs such unlikely hosts as Winona Ryder and Jello Biafra with artwork contributed by Raymond Pettibon, Robbie Conal, Floria Sigismondi, Camille Rose Garcia, Matt Mahurin, Jaime Hernandez and others, as well as abovementioned sixspace alumni Friedman and Fairey.

Despite all this, surely sixspace can't be without its critics. "One time this guy came in with a giant cell phone," laughs Caryn. "Seriously, the thing was like four feet long and he started screaming into it, 'Hello? Yeah? No, I'm in an art gallery! No it's total rubbish! Hold on, I can't hear you...' and walked out." We couldn't agree less.

Vegan Tokyo Teriyaki. It's a vegan restaurant that's only one block away from the gallery. It just appeared one day and it has everything from sushi to orange "chicken."



OKLUBE 58

THE LA ISSUE

Words Frosty Image Kevin Ramos



# THIS JAZZ HEAD HEARS THE CALL OF THE ANCIENTS.

### THE CALL

Carlos Niño (Aquarius) lives and breathes waves of music. LA-born and bred, he vibrates with the city. His positive energy sprouts sound between concrete cracks. Carlos is here to spread urban bush music and grow along the way.

### **RADIO & RHYTHM**

The young Niño switched on with the flip of a radio dial. Rob One, Mike Nardone, and Michael "Mixing" Moore pollinated his ears through the airwaves of LA urban station KDAY and college stations KXLU and KCRW. Mesmerized by their musical messages, Carlos sought to share his own vibes with the people. At 16 he took the mic in hand and started hosting his own weekly show on Pacifica network station KPFK. Ten years later, he's still heavy in the mix with his show Spaceways. He rocks next-millennium hip-hop alongside batucada, field recordings, Sun Ra and as-yet unnamed genres. His radio transmissions are shared worldwide via his residency on Dublab.com.

### DIG. PAUSE. RECORD

Carlos is a cat who's always onto something new. Like Bambaataa before him, he's searching for the Perfect Beat. Niño excavates rare grooves with eagle eyes. His heart thumps to hip-hop-Slick Rick led him to the Jungle Brothers, who led to Madlib and beyond. With a foot always in the future. Niño's quest for more magic motion led him to the studio. Since high school, the man's been crafting bedroom rhythms with his friend Fabian Ammon and their Ammoncontact project has unleashed a flash-flood of recent releases on labels like Eastern Developments, Soul Jazz and Plug Research, Ammoncontact creates minimal hiphop with electro-organic back-flips, an aesthetic that also glows in Hu-Vibrational, Carlos's collaboration with jazz sages Adam Rudolph and Hamid Drake.

### DOIN' IT IN THE PARK

Like many of LA's turned-on hip-hop heads, Carlos's connected education came at Leimert Park's Good Life Café. The Freestyle Fellowship blazed trails at the venue with endless rhymes, and Niño listened closely. Naturally, his ears also opened to the gray-haired cats in the

shadows, the elders who brought a movement into existence but never got a nod. Niño hopes to change this; he celebrates the pioneers and draws inspiration from their messages. Since high school, he's been organizing the freshest shows in LA, and his Todosonidos Presenta events give life to soulful combinations. He pairs masters like Terry Callier, Gil Scott-Heron, Yusef Lateef and Phil Ranelin with new generation talents like Blackalicious, Saul Williams, Nobody, Daedelus and Cut Chemist.

### **CYCLES & THEMES**

Various themes light Niño's path, for example, Sun Ra saying, "I'm working on the other side of time" or LA music saint Horace Tapscott pronouncing, "Our vibe is contributive, not competitive." Music is a magic elixir for universal love, and Niño sees himself as the vessel that carries it. These days, his mind rotates to the theme, "Stay focused-you have so much purpose." This mantra guides his creative output and personal life. Carlos Niño is young and alive, and wants to share beauty with you.

www.todosonidospresenta.org

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

Dwight Trible



THE LA ISSUE Words frosty Image Jessica Miller Words Martin Turenne Image Christopher Woodcock



### SO-CAL TECHNOIST IS A SCENE UNTO HIMSELF.

No one will ever really know Los Angeles-it's a sprawling metropolis that defies you to locate its essence. From the Valley to the coast, the City of Angels is a multi-hued quilt, a tattered patchwork of a thousand distinct swatches. Because it contains multitudes, LA provides the ideal home for John Tejada, a producer whose only signature is versatility.

As comfortable with a rustic guitar motif as with an elaborate drum schematic, Tejada has churned out a prolific oeuvre in his seven years on the scene. The Austrian-born producer is best known for his melancholic techno minimalism-music that represents the flipside of SoCal's sunshine sensibility. "I've never been part of any scene," says the peaceable producer. "There's never really been a scene here, anyway. I quite like being secluded."

Over his career, Tejada has memorialized L.A. with various track titles, whether mocking the city's penchant for progressive house ("City of Drumrolls, City of Headaches") or giving a shout-out to the suburbs ("Pasadena Shuffle"). Tejada's latest album is Fairfax Sake (Playhouse), an exercise in voluptuous microhouse, co-produced by his longtime studio partner, Arian Leviste. The duo's dance card is full for the rest of 2003, as they will soon drop another floor-oriented full-length

(The Dot and the Line) on Moods & Grooves.

As for his solo work, Tejada's imminent release schedule includes an LP (The Toiling of Idle Hands) for Immigrant Records, and a handful of EPs on his own Palette Recordings, a label renowned for consistently tough twelves from folks like Pieter K and Dominick Martin. "I'm never very organized, but I seem to get all these things out," he says, baffled. "I'm not quite sure how I do it."

This fall, the boardsman will finish yet another new solo LP (this one for LA's Plug Research label) and lay down tracks for I'm Not a Gun, his indie-rock collaboration with guitarist Takeshi Nishimoto. Still, no matter how many of Tejada's singles find their way onto playlists, the man's most widely heard productions are his sample CDs, several of which provide the soundtrack for late-night TV shows.

"Recently, I was watching this documentary on Tupac's death," recalls Tejada. "And during this sad part of it, I heard some downbeat hip-hop loop I made playing in the background. No matter how sad it was supposed to be, it was hard not to laugh when I heard that."

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

esdays at the Knitting Factory), which dates back nine years and continues to bring the world's most rimental electronic acts to LA for live performan

### OFF-KILTER CLOTHES THAT YOU CAN ACTUALLY WEAR? THIS IS A HORSE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR.

Show Pony, located at 1543 Echo Park Avenue, is home to a sash that flew around the sun and back. a fluffy gown whispering unicorn poems, and a sparkling necklace waltzing with moonlit jellyfish. Like its namesake, the Echo Park boutique thrives on frivolity. "Everything in the Show Pony is completely unnecessary," chimes its founder Kime Buzzelli. It's an explosive dream of what clothing

On Friday the 13th of October 2000, Show Pony twinkled into existence. Kime envisioned a magic

space for sharing the expressions of young artists, a place to flip off fashion formats in favor of fantasy. This modus operandi enables ideas to flash instantaneously into reality. The Show Pony family thrives on its electric imagination.

Residents Buzzelli and Niki Livingston admit they're like "two hyped-up girls let loose in grandma's attic." Sequins fly through air flooded with fluttering fabric, while graffiti-fiend Kutma is set on screen-printing every surface. Other regulars include quirky animal appliqués from Fancy Pony Land, Madley's organic knits and insane party dresses from Niki Eatman.

The mode is turned-on offbeat, drawing inspiration from Niki de St. Phalle, Marquesa Luisa Cassatti, Yayoi Kusama, Crazy Old Ladies and Gothic Lolita Japanese girls. Kime's eyes are always scanning the fringes for shining artists to incorporate into her textile troupe. To be seen is its own scene-the Show Pony hosts monthly art openings that are quite happening happenings.

The Show Pony stars are shining. The store is a primary destination for many fashion stylists, and you can regularly spot SP's clothing in music videos and magazines. Who knows? Maybe their creative waves will seep into Shakira's skin, transforming her into the reincarnation of Nina Simone. In the meantime, Show Pony will keep you dreaming.

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET? One-dollar lattes at the Echo Park Asian Market. Fifty wallet-size glamour shots on Sunset Boulevard for \$9.99.





TRASHY, COM

# LA CITY GUIDE

SOMETHING TO DO. SOMEPLACE TO SEE. SOMETHING TO KNOW. ENTER XLR8R'S SUBJECTIVE OVERVIEW OF HOW TO HANG, WHERE TO KICK IT AND HOW TO MAKE OUT IN STYLE IN LA. COMPILED AND EDITED BY TAMARA PALMER



(Track 16 Gallery, Gallery of Functional Art and many others) 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica, 310.829.5854. *A massive* arts complex featuring numerous independ nt galleries, all with different specialties

12611 Venice Blvd., 310.398.7404, ww.cherrydelosreyes.com. Their alternative exhibitions pair local and regional non-com mercial art with their international cousins.

1629 18th St., Santa Monica, 310.829.9789. Home of resistance art and

2100 N. Main St., Bldg. A-9, 323.342.0717. Part of the non-profit Brewery Art Association, a large downtown artists'

170 South La Brea Ave., 323.933.4408, www.mkgallery.com. Houses a variety of contemporaneous artists such as Dalek, Camille Rose Garcia and Justin Wood. Check Todd Schorr's warped works openna October 18th.

1005 N. Fairfax Ave., 323,654,2192. ww.newimageartgallery.com. Multimedia art objects and concepts in this gallery, which has ow expanded into two adjacent locations.

at the Gershwin Hotel) 5535 Hollywood Blvd. ww.oneeyespace.com. New space dedicated to creating a new format for art shows, with a emphasis on musical interaction.

549 W. 23rd St., 213.765.0248, vww.sixspace.com. Specializing in art that bubbles up from the vibrant streets.

### 2022B Broadway, Santa Monica,

www.artadvice.com. Assists in career devel opment for visual artists.

UND www.emdef.org. A local group with national notions of combating federal oppression of electronic music culture.

2151 Lake Shore Ave., 323,664,1518. ww.freewaves.org. Workshops, festivals, Internet resources and advice for independ nt new media organizations and individuals.

AR CENTER 7425 Sunset Blvd. Hollywood, 90046, 323.874.1060. On "gui tar row" in Hollywood, visit their "rock walk in front of the store.

PO Box 6211. Malibu. CA. 90265. 818.707.7222, www.ilio.com. They make excellent sample CDs and are aligned with the Spectrasonics Virtual Instrument company

142 Arena St., El Segundo, CA 90245, 310.322.9990, www.jlcooper.com. They make the best portable miniature mixing desks..

45 E. Saint Joseph St., Arcadia, CA. 91006, 626.445.2842, www.m-audio.com. From sound cards to USB interfaces and awesome mini-keyboard controllers, this company rules.

### NATIVE INSTRUMENTS USA UNI 5631A Hollywood Blyd., Los Angeles, CA.

90028. 866.556.6487. www.native-instruments.com. The stalwart German virtual instrument software company's US division, maker of Kontakt and Reaktor programs.

### PRO SOUND AND STAGE

11070 Valley View St., Cypress, CA. 90630, 1.800.268.5520. www.pssl.com. An on-line DJ and club specialty retailer-from Shure cartridges to disco balls to samplers, this is your one-click powerstation

5100 S. Fastern Ave., Los Angeles, CA. 90040, 323.890.3700, www.rolandus.com. Aceeeed! Yes they make the 303, 808 and other legendary bass and drum modules, but have you seen their MC909 sampling groove box?

9200 Eton Ave., Chatsworth, CA, 91311, 818.678.5100, www.steinberg.net. Where would drum & bass and other loop-based music be without the people behind Cubase, VST and Nuendo audio software?

7733 Telegraph Rd., Montebello, CA. 90640, 323.726.0303, www.tascamdj.com. Tascam is a new leader in the digital DJ mixer market, their products have to be used to be appreciated-21st century all the way.

Premier keyboard and synth manufacturers

### 1200 N. Alvarado Blvd. 213 413 5550

Huge selection of radical books and the best mag/zine selection in East Hollywood. You want to support "la gente" and "la revo-

1229 Third Street Promenade, 310.458.1499, Santa Monica, www.arcanabooks.com, New and used, rare and collectable selection for serious book people, run by serious snoots.

### 8585 Melrose, 310.659.1733,

www.bodhitree.com. West Hollywood's original home of trendy spirituality in print.

8818 Sunset Blvd. 310.659.3110. www.booksoup.com. The ultimate store in the ultimate people-watching location on the Sunset Strip is particularly strong on media

### CIRCUS OF BOOKS

8320 Santa Monica Blvd., 323.656.6533; 401 Sunset Blvd., 323.666.1304, www.circusofbooks.com. Most often mentioned for its extensive Adult periodical selection, the Circus also excels in the realm of conventional titles.

6225 Hollywood Blvd., 323,467, 3296. Rare and out-of-print books on classic Hollywood icons and other luminaries of

214 Wilshire Blvd., 310,458,9074. one LA resource for art and architecture books, in a new location.

123 Astronaut Ellison S. Onizuka Way 213.687.4447, www.kinokuniya.com. Books, magazines and limited audio and DVD select tions on Japanese and Japanese-American culture; also a source for high quality art books.

7522 Sunset Blvd., 323.851.7223, www.meltcomics.com. They've got everything from Superman suits to Kubrick dolls to back issues of Love & Rockets, with a gallery that hosts work from up-and-coming illustrators.

1450 2nd St., Santa Monica Blvd., www.msbooks.com. A pillar in the LA inde-pendent bookseller scene and a Westside stronghold for its discerning selection and

8826 Sunset Blvd., 310.657.5557, www.mysterypierbooks.com. For serious genre enthusiasts/collectors only, it's a lovey adjunct to its neighbor Book Soup.

1351 Westwood Blvd., 310.477.7300, www.sisterhood.com. Best source of inde pendent feminist literature and criticism.

116 N. Robertson, 310,358,2500. www.storyopolis.com. This amazing children's bookstore and gallery (Michael Jackson's favorite) sets the standard for luxury kid lit that is just as tempting to adults.

6655 Santa Monica Blvd., 323,462,0714. 323.462.1291. Two massive, long-standing clubs in the same area, home to some of the biggest gay and mixed nights in town, including Michelle's XXX Revue and Spundae.

3760 Wilshire Blvd., 213.380.8400.

taurant on its off nights, it's still worth looking out for the occasional live perform ance or interesting DJ gig.

3787 Cahuenga Blvd., 818,980,1615. location in the Valley.

3172 Los Feliz Blvd., 323,662,9227. www.bigfootlodge.com. Scouts and wooden logs are par for the course with this bar's motif, but the DJ musical policy changes nightly.

1652 N. Cherokee Ave., 323,462,9621. all clash for attention at this unpretentious, old-school venue.

1650 Schrader Ave., 323,465,7449, Home of the essential house night Club Deep and other discerning one-offs.

6507 Sunset Blvd., 323,466,3416, Check for the occasional relevant live show, other-wise you might be disappointed if you walk into some sort of wrong '80s timewarp.

5364 Wilshire Blvd., 323,938,1696, A spot for live Afro-Cuban and Latin bands, and J Lo owns it too (which shouldn't be a deal

4500 Los Feliz Blvd., 323,663,8979, This club was immortalized in the movie Swingers, but don't let that stop you from checking out a time capsule of a classic swing dancing hall.

6510 Santa Monica Blvd., 323.466.6111, www.dragonfly.com. If the Friday night fetish action with Miss Kittys isn't your cup of tea. perhaps the odd live concert might pique your interest.

1822 Sunset Blvd., 213.413.8200, www.attheecho.com. Weekly nights devoted to reverb (Dub Club on Wednesdays) and electro revivalism (Synthetic on Fridays), plus adventurous one-offs and a restaurant

4212 Sunset Blvd., 323,668,0318. grooves in a dinner theater-like environ

### 5257 W. Adams Blvd., 323.954.8080,

www.faisdodo.com. Enjoy Cajun food and an eclectic lounge where the soundtrack or bian club nights or a Brazilian band.

4658 Melrose Ave., 323,664,8913, One of the vital hip-hop clubs, Gabah is host to nights like Saturday's hip-hop staple Chocolate Bar and Thursday's rare groove funk feast The Root Down.

# Buy 1 DVD Get 1/2 off the 2nd\*

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# LA CITY GUIDE



NEW IMAGE ART



MELTDOWN





7080 Hollywood Blvd., 323.465.3336. Acid Jazz features here heavily alongside hip-hop and other slow grind sounds.

12249 Venice Blvd., 310. 390.1076. Drinks served by sexy nurses and DJs that veer from hip-hop and house to drum & bass.

6525 Sunset Blvd., 323.957.0722. A multileveled slice of vintage architecture that's per-fect for its swank one-offs and special events.

6356 Hollywood Blvd., 323.465.IVAR. Bottle service and other trappings alongside a musical diet heavy on the house music.

3233 Helms Ave., Culver City, 310.271.9039. Put the nu-jazz to the side for an evening to experience the beauty of an earlier kind of jazz.

8771 W. Pico Blvd., 310,275,2619, When all you want is a slice of pizza and a good

9039 Sunset Blvd., 310.274.5800, www.keyclub.com. You could find almost anything in this cavernous venue depend-ing on the night, from hard rock bands and gangster rappers to live jazz.

6555 Hollywood Blvd., www.kingkingholly-wood.com. Saturday house staple Balance rules the roost, but other non-house sounds fill the rest of the week.

### OUNGE 7021 Hollywood Blvd.,

323.463.0204, www.knittingfactory.com. The West Coast outpost of the classic New York institution features a smaller embedded Alterknit Lounge, which hosts some of the city's most experimental offerings

5657 Melrose Ave., 323.467.4068. Home to the astoundingly good Wax parties every other Saturday (adventurous house vibes) also a good place to ask about one-offs.

432 N. Fairfax Ave., 323,852,1073, All ages

1646 N. Las Palmas, 323,466,3430, Mafia esque Italian restaurant with a basement dancefloor area that hosts various one-offs.

1645 Wilcox Ave., 323.962.7712. Check out Wednesday's Transistor Lounge for broken beat and electro; various house-friendly nights.

7702 Santa Monica Blvd., 323,656,7968. www.parlourclub.com. Spoken word events sit snug on the calendar alongside punk, indie, electro and house DJ events.

9009 Sunset Blvd. Good rock shows grace club is host to some pretty fun '80s nights.

2500 Riverside Dr., 323.669.1226. Drag

queens or techno specialists-it just depend on what night you hit up this veteran spot.

2906 W Sunset Blvd., 323,663,9636, A great divey live music spot to hear under-ground rock and electronic outfits before they break big.

1717 Silverlake Blvd 213 833 2843 www.clubspaceland.com. Silverlake's pre-miere live stop for tomorrow's buzzing indie rock bands. Trucker hat not required for entry.

814 Broadway, Santa Monica, 310.899.1989. This nightclub is currently the Saturday night domain of the Vice Magazine crew, which at least has to mean

1026 Wilshire Blvd., 310,393,6611, ccentuate the world-wise blends of live

9081 Santa Monica Blvd. This old school rock venue still has a smattering of good taste in their show calendar at any given time, and it is a fine place for a concer

### 1235 Vine St., 323.960.0800. Weekly free

listeners nibble on fondue

8852 Sunset Blvd., www.viperroom.com. This star-saturated Sunset Strip hag is predictably icky most of the time but some times gets some fun live shows.

8901 Sunset Blvd., www.whiskyagogo.cor Its pay to play policy brings in a number of new and unsigned bands and DJ nights in. so with a lot of patience we suppose another Doors might come along like they did in the Sixties (but we're not holding our breath).

### 10717 Venice Blvd 310 841 6525

www.zabumba.com. Brazilian food, live and recorded music and simulcasts of Carnaval and other events on Brazilian TV.

1301 5th St. Santa Monica, 310 451 2221 dub, house and other enlightened sounds in a classy African/Indian decorated theme.

2609 Hyperion, 323.665.2929. Beautiful of drum & bass and other various styles

www.theelrev.com. This Miracle Mile ballroom

6126 Hollywood Blvd., 323.468.1770. This vintage movie house got a modern update a few years back and is now a vibrant con-

1735 N. Vine St. Long the bastion of modern rock radio shows

6251 Sunset Blvd. Despite one of the toughest security forces for a mid-sized venue, the Palladium adds a bit of old charm to a concert with its regal décor.

8430 Sunset Blvd., 323,848,5100. www.hob.com. They've got blues, for sure (including their time-honored weekend brunches), but the House also carries

3790 Wilshire Blvd., 213.380.5005, www.thewiltern.com. This classic theatre has always been a gorgeous place to see a given some extra polish.

4600 Hollywood Blvd., 323.660.6733. Sex and rockers have always gone together. Here you'll find hot indie boys and girls enjoying airl-positive burlesque

### 6671 Sunset Blvd., 323.463.5611. Famous

402 N. La Cienega, 310.652.4543. Home for being shaped like a boat when mos buildings aren't.

1760 N. Vermont Ave., 323,665,4294 Made extra famous by their scene in Swingers, tacky piano-bar act Marty and Elayne still reign supreme at this old-style

### FREDERICKS OF HOLLYWOOD LINGERIE USEUM 6608 Hollywood Blvd.,

323.466.8506, www.fredericks.com. A small corner room of this massive lingerie superstore houses bras and undergarments belonging to Milton Berle, Marilyn Monroe onna, among others, free to view

5153 Hollywood Blvd., 323,666,1187, This 8316 West Third St 323 951 0620 skanky yet amusing strip club in a shopping center once nurtured a young, pre-fame for the styled-out home. Courtney Love and, no doubt, countless

FILM/VIDEO VENUES

THEATRE 6712 Hollywood Blvd

Special retrospectives and classics.

6356 Hollywood Blvd., 323,817,FILM.

1200 N. Alvarado St., 213.484.8846,

7165 Beverly Blvd., 323.938.4038,

Revivals for the silver screen connoisseur

11272 Santa Monica Blvd., 310.478.6379.

unplugged, if you will. Harold Lloyd and Clara

1619 Wilshire Blvd., 310,453,8655, Delicious

7224 Melrose Ave., 323,938,0500, A fairly

8920 Sunset Blvd., 310.860.9009,

THE LOS ANGELES CACOPHONY SOCIETY

sive field trips and activities for years.

www.losangeles.cacophony.org. This rau-cous group has hosted wonderfully subvei

600 State Dr., Exposition Park, 213.744.7432, www.caam.ca.gov. Its focus is

on the Golden State and the West Coast but the CAAM is one of the country's pre-eminent resources for black American history.

700 State Dr., Exposition Park, 213.724.

modern and classic science innovation.

1200 Getty Center Dr., 310.440.7300

Resource Center, a cultural authority.

3623, www.casciencectr.org. Artifacts and IMAX movies collide in this showcase of

www.getty.edu. More like a whole day's jour-ney than a mere museum, book reservations

early and set aside a full day for the Center's

(LACMA) 5905 Wilshire Blvd., 323,857-6000.

www.lacma.org. Something for everyone in one massive space, from ancient Islami

artifacts and Italian baroque paintings to modern American multimedia experimen

250 S. Grand Ave. @ California Plaza,

love to watch them.

www.hustlerhollywood.com. Larry Flynt's

retail smut palace-now with café!-caters to

annabe) porn stars and the men who

Home of the long-running Saturday night screenings of The Rocky Horror Picture

611 N. Fairfax Ave., 323.655.2520,

ECHO DARK EILM CENTEI

323.466.FILM, www.egyptiantheatre.com.

www.cine-space.com. Food, cocktails and films in a unique and popular venue.

9015 Sunset Blvd., 310.278.4232. This Sunset Strip bar exists for your fantasies, in case you want to resurrect Guns N Roses' "November Rain" video or at least act like

7961 Melrose Ave., 323.653.0229, .com. The West Coast shop (owned by Malcolm McLaren's son).

7021 Melrose Ave., 323.933.5752. Low key Brit duds for skinheads, selectors and assorted skankin' pickles.

305 N. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton, 714.446.0666. Orange County's outpost for limited-edition items from Silas, Adidas, Cutler & Gross and more.

6316 Yucca St., 323.461.444, ore.com. Adjacent to the 222 Gallery, 4x4 runs game with cuttingedge cloth, home accessories, and books from names like Leche, Braveland, Green Lady and 2K.

8100 Melrose Ave., 323.651.4129. Best spot to look for young and famous Hollywood actresses and models, this ti-faceted store (clothing, gifts, beauty fine luggage and more) is ground zero for the city's style trends of the minute.

2015 Sawtelle Blvd., 310,478,1819. cute Asian pop culture item (from books to toys), you very well might find it here.

2220 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena 626.683.7500, www.greyone.com. Hosts of the wildly popular sneaker subculture event, Soled Out, as well as stockists of books and gear from Social Studies, 7th Letter, and Stencil. An accompanying gallery features work from popular graf artists.

7220 Melrose Ave., 323,934,8684, robably the coolest goth shop around, ith 'nuff animal bones and body jewelry for the blackest of souls.

1543 Echo Park Ave 213 482 7676

4633 Hollywood Blvd., 323.663.0122. Between these two adjacent shops one will find eccentric toys, toiletries and talis-

7527 Sunset Blvd., 323.512. 3807, www.spanofsunset.com, Clothing, cool tovs, funky art pieces and other things you'll

myriad of beautiful art and gorgeous views 112 1/2 S. La Brea, 323.937.6077. The nal home of Stüssy style and limited 369 E. First St., 213.625.0414, www.janm.org.

anywhere, you get exactly what you pay for.

### 112 1/2 S. La Brea, 323,937,6077, The high end of low end shoes for collectors o

1766 N. Vermont Ave., 323,666,3483.

3938 Sunset Blvd 323-661-2741

### 6340 Hollywood Blvd, #2, 323-466-8011

www.museumordeatn.com. rvecropnillacs and other fans of the morbid have plenty to delight in a museum whose motto is, "Don't

213.626.6222, www.moca.org.

American Apparel is the most passionate and innovative wholesale blank T-shirt manufacturer in the world. We are committed to producing garments of the highest quality while pioneering industry standards of social responsibility in the

For more information about our exclusive combed cotton product line, and our ground breaking political mission, please visit our web site: www.americanapparel.net

workplace.

### **American Apparel is** opening on Broadway

The public will soon have easier access to the most innovative T-shirts and knitwear in the world. Be on the lookout for American Apparel's first retail store in the US, opening in late September in the old Antique Boutique space in NYC: 712 Broadway New York, NY

**Consumers:** You can buy our products 24-7 online for immediate delivery or maybe find them at your favorite retailer.



**Promoters:** If you're showcasing an event, band, record label, company or film, ask your screen printer to use sweatshop-free American Apparel garments. Or, contact us directly if you need a screen printer referral or additional wholesale information

# LA CITY GUIDE







### 9341 Venice Blvd., 310,836,6131,

www.mjt.org. You win a prize if you car describe what this house of oddities is really all about, but it's one of the best times you can have being totally confused in a museur

### UM OF NEON ART

501 W. Olympic Blvd., 213.489.9918, nona.org. It's not just for beer signs, it's an art form that has enough creative on to fill two locations of MONA.

## 900 Exposition Blvd., Exposition Park, 213.763.DINO, www.nhm.org. Where

## rs come to roost and party in LA.

### AGE MUSEUM AT LA BREA TAR PITS

5801 Wilshire Blvd., 323.857.6311, www.tarpits.org. You heard about them in old Looney Tunes cartoons, but you can actually check out the Pits and the accom-panying fossil-rich museum, just steps away from LACMA too.

6060 Wilshire Blvd 323 930 CARS www.petersen.org. This giant historical overview for collectors and other car enthusiasts is sadly also the site of the Notorious

### IMON WIESENTHAL CENTER MUSEUM OF

NCE 9786 West Pico Blvd., 310.553.8403, www.wiesenthal.com/mot. An intense, hands-on and extremely per-sonalized memorial to the Holocaust and other atrocities.

10899 Wilshire Blvd 310 443 7000 tion specializing in Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings sits alongside a

### JBLIC ART

4800 Hollywood Blyd, Home of some of the city's most engaging public sculptures and four famous Frank Lloyd Wright houses, including the Ennis-Brown House used in Blade Runner

Exposition Blvd. and State Dr. The rose gar-den found in this urban sprawl makes for eye candy and a pleasant fragrance amidst visiting one of the park's many historical museums.

### OOD AND SUNSET JUNCTION BILLBOARD Known for such gems as "God and Allah Need to Talk."

112 S. La Brea. Aaron Rose curates this Last we checked, it was running a

### USC GUIDE TO PUBLIC ART IN LOS ANGELES

www.usc.edu/isd/archives/la/pubart, An incredibly detailed citywide list of all sorts of free art works, encompassing multiple media.

### **VENICE BEACH PUBLIC ART WORKS** Venice Beach. Community-sponsored

murals and graffiti.

1765 F 107th St 213 847 4646 These ute to ingenuity in the face of struggle.

### DIO STATIONS

**KXLII** 88.9 FM

KUCI 88.9 FM (O.C.)

KCRW 89.9 FM

USC 91.5 FM

KBT 100.3 FM

KPWR 105.9 FM

### www.automatrecords.com

www.dublab.com

### 213.427.1580, www.empere

EXIST DANCE www.existdance.com

### CEICHA RECORDS

www.ericdavenport.com

### MYITOPIA RECORDINGS www.mvutopia.com

DALETTE RECORDINGS

### www.paletterecordings.com

NOMENTAL MUSIC www.phonomental.com

323.467. 3970, www.plugresearch.com

### PROJECT BLOWED www.projectblowed.com

www.samurairecordsonline.com

### SOUNDS ARE ACTIVE

### www.soundsareactive.con

### www.spytechrecords.com

www.stonesthrow.com

### WAX RECORDS

5639 Melrose Avenue, 213,931,2757. www.aonerecordfinders.com. Handy if sometimes pricey service to fetch those older tunes that haven't yet materialized despite countless digging missions.

6400 Sunset Blvd., 323,245,6400. www.amoebamusic.com. The essential one stop shop for any sound in any style

1150 N. Highland Ave., 323.469.4700, www.aronsrecords.com. Pre-Amoeba, this was the town warrior; stiff competition abounds now but Aron's still puts forth a strong effort and carries new and used vinyl, DVDs, CDs and is still place to find CTI albums priced for \$5. Well, the George

Benson ones at least.

3812 W. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank. 818.848.7090. Hard-to-find indie rock and extended family, including an enviable exotica collection.

1606 N. Cahuenga Blvd., 323.466.6003, www.beatmarketla.com. The newest rhythm merchant for hip-hop sounds in Hollywood.

### 145 E. 19th St., Unit B, Costa Mesa,

949.646.3548, www.djculture.com. Simply Jeff's new store celebrates the breakbeat enthusiast but is no less satisfying for fans 4637 Hollywood Blvd., 323.663.2867. Garish, outlandish and fun duds at this almost costume-like shop. of other upfront styles.

### 7619 Melrose Ave 323 651 3520

7617 1/2 W. Beverly Blvd., 323.692.0061. www.dmcrecords.com. Stalwart rave scene shop still stocks plenty of house, techno, High end vintage threads and one-of-a-kind breaks and drum & bass.

### 2930 Bristol St. Costa Mesa

D. Core stocks the harder edge of electron ic music and plenty of used classics.

8163 Arroyo Dr, Rosemead, 626.573.8818. A veteran of the Eastside party scene, for 7428 Melrose Ave 323 653 3028 Clothing nds for every budget, though it certainly those without patience to trek to Hollywood helps if you have a little money to spare for their hip-hop, house or breaks.

NIQUE COFFEE SHOPS

Spoken word events, readings and slightly

hippie-ish live musicians converge on this

5931 Franklin Ave., 323.464.6008. Gaze

1202 N Alvarado St., 213.483.3955. Comfy

vintage coffee house that serves light,

French cuisine-inspired breakfasts and lunch and a charming 1960s jazz-café-style layout. Delightfully free of internet stalls.

8612 Melrose Ave., 310.657.9300,

7286 Beverly Blvd, 323.931.4943.

www.elixir.net. This tranquil tea garden in the middle of the West Hollywood bustle

Wireless Internet connections and tasty food at the same time, which seems com

426 N. Fairfax Ave., 323,658,7833, With

for those times when you want to sip hot

drinks inside what feels like a spaceship

419 N. Fairfax Ave., 323.651,2030, 24-hour

926 Broxton Ave., 310.208.0448. With the cheapest, freshest cookies and most lus-

cious made-to-order ice cream sandwic in Los Angeles (if not California), who

6251 Hollywood Blyd, No Jard? Too had

Sometimes all you want are big injections

of greasy Mexican platters, found in abun

818.243.5928. Plenty for vegetarians to reioice at a place that provides the best

comforts of a greasy spoon without the

1850 N. Vermont Ave., 323.667.0062. This space age diner is spot-on in its simplicity

6333 W.3rd St. (in the Farmer's Market).

Tasty, low-key breakfast and lunch staples

323.933.0773, www.kokomocafe.com

dance in this little quick stop shack.

1013 S Brand Ave Glendale

needs a real meal?

greasy part.

Jewish deli with the best baked goods in

town and even a little adjacent cocktail

TOP XLR8R EATS

one of the most unusual atmospheric touches (think day-glo robots), this is ideal

longingly at the Church of Scientology across the street while lounging in this con-

veniently located Hollywood haunt.

1028 Wilshire Blvd., 310.394.7113.

Westside staple.

FLIX'R TONICS & TEAS

also has a great gift shop.

mon but actually isn't.

323 663 3717 www.fatheats.com Essential stop for serious independent hip-hop sounds, also check the releases from their own and associated labels.

13616 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks, 818.995.7603. A relative new kid on the block comes packing with various flavors of

### GREEN HELL RECO

14551 Ventura Blvd, Sherman Oaks, 818.784.5127, www.spookypie.com/gre If you aren't looking for punk, you shouldn't be in Hell.

14566 Ventura Blvd, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403, 818.981.3366, www.grooveriders.com Great for hard-to-find electronic and rave clas-

3328 Pico Blvd, Santa Monica, CA 90405, 310.450.1222, www.houseofrecords.com Not the snot for the latest 12-inches but a good stop for '80s and '90s sounds on vinyl.

1101 E Walnut, Pasadena, 626.449.3359, www.poobah.com, Don't let the hut fool you: there are serious sounds for collectors here

### 11609 West Pico Boulevard,

310.478.4217. A giant used store brimming with stacks of dusty vinyl to pillage.

### TORE 2028 Westwood Blvd.,

310.474.8685, www.rhinowestwood.com Now in combination with Hollywood's preiere comic book shop, a focal point in any Westside shopping itinerary.

1716 W. Sunset Blvd. 213.989.0146. Echo Park indie rock outpost that frequently hosts live in-stores from up 'n' coming acts like the Court and Spark and the Sharp Ease.

7704 Melrose Ave. 323.651.0630. www.streetsounds.com. One of the original dance music specialists is still going strong.

3910 Sunset Blvd., 323.667.2011, www.uponshop.com. Strictly used jazz, hip-hop, reggae, soul and dance classics merchants providing the essence of black music for serious collectors, specializing in 12" singles.

7201 Melrose Ave. Unit A 323 932 6211 www.waxrecords.com.Classic and current house get the most love but it's also a good source for techno and broken beat

### HRIFT/JUNK STORES

OUT OF THE CLOSET

131 N. La Brea. 323.938.8604. A good stop for selling clothes or picking up some not-yet-old-enough-to-be-vintage wear.

### 825 N. La Brea Ave., 323,939,0528.

360 N. Fairfax, 323.934.1956. Another

Two locations, 1800 N Vermont Ave., 323.669.8464 and 7312 Melrose Ave.

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THE LA ISSUE

Words Peter Nicholson Image B+

Words Paul Sullivan Image Joel "Rage" Garcia



# FROM THE BEACH TO THE MOUNTAINS, NOBODY CARRIES LA'S PAST INTO THE FUTURE

As soon as Elvin Estela realizes that Café Abir has Guinness on tap, our plans to head elsewhere for the interview disappear and we settle down for the duration. In San Francisco to open for the Mars Volta, the man known as Nobody nurses a pint while he marvels at the chill that we in SF call summer, and talks about the new directions he's headed in with his latest album.

Any relying on preconceptions could cause some to overlook the 50 minutes of pastoral bliss Estela has crafted on *Pacific Drift: Western Water Music Vol. 1.* Those seeking another installment of darkly tinted hip-hop along the lines of *Soulmates* (Ubiquity, 2000) might be surprised by the psychedelic pop turn Estela has taken, though fans familiar with his other projects might have seen it coming. Whether buying records for Fingerprints

Records Store, programming eclectic treats on Dublab.com, or spreading knowledge on "She Comes in Colours," his radio show on Loyola University's KXLU, Estela makes no bones about his love of '60s psychedelia and bands like the Zombies or even the Monkees.

"Hokeyness is a good thing sometimes. I'm really into '70s and '60s soft rock right now, and it's hokey, but still a little twisted and soulful," says Estela as he mulls over the free, almost innocent feeling that runs through much of *Pacific Drift.* "It's kinda sad, but it's still hopeful—that's a really hard feeling to put into music, but I wanted to see if I could do it."

In addition to the mood swing, the new album also marks a major change in how Estela constructs songs, with a shift away from stacking loops and toward taking individual sounds as building blocks, as well as a move from MCs to singers. "I noticed I was getting into fights with every rapper [over how I wanted it to sound]. My music wasn't matching the

lyrics enough. That's why I wanted to work with singers—they added the exact emotion I wanted."

While Soulmates featured heads like Freestyle Fellowship and 2Mex, for Pacific Drift Estela enlisted collaborators like Jimmy Tamborello (Dntel, the Postal Service) and Ikey Owens (the Mars Volta), drawing on a group of friends that formed around KXLU. The success of his friends' own ventures has also provided more opportunities for Estela to reach new audiences. "I like DJing in clubs. I think if I got my mind together enough, I could rock a party or whatever. But sometimes I just want to play music to people who appreciate it, and opening for a band, you can do that." Whatever the venue, Nobody's love for Southern California sounds, as well as his own sunny contributions, seems sure to shine through.

www.ubiquityrecords.com

WHAT'S LA'S BEST KEPT SECRET?
A veggie ham and egg burrito from Astro Burger on Melrose and Gower.

# CHICANO PRIDE AND A PUNK-MEETS-THE-STUDIO APPROACH TO ELECTRONIC MUSIC MAKE SLOWRIDER ONE OF LA'S MOST EXCIT-ING NEW COMBOS.

"The original idea was to explore the Chicano music and social movements of the late '60s early '70s and make an updated version of it," comments Slowrider's founder D. Gomez. Initially conceived as a home recording project, Slowrider soon expanded when Gomez moved from Long Beach to Echo Park in 1995 and met more and more like-minded folk.

At one point the band consisted of nine members, though today there are "just" six-drummer Moises Ruiz Almanza, keyboardist Gomez, bassist Pat Hoed, guitarist/vocalist Carlos Zepeda, percussionist/vocalist Olmeca and guitarist Jeremy Keller, all of whom are responsible for the band's restlessly hybridized Latino sound.

Wil-Dog Abers and Ulises Bella from Ozomatli produced the group's inaugural release, *Mas Alla*. "We were a very raw group then, and they managed to make us sound better than we were," confides Gomez. "*Mas Alla* is a very studio kind of record and we experimented with sounds that were very different from the live group."

The second record, *Nacimiento*, attempted to redress the balance by creating a more natural sound that was closer to the live experience. The band's most recent LP, *Historias En Revision* (Revisionist History) is a culmination of the two prior albums, with half of it recorded as a band and the other half consisting of programmed tracks and remixes.

"We wanted to re-invent what people perceived as Slowrider's music, and music by Chicanos in general," says Gomez. "It's as experimental as it is natural. *Historias* has three new songs, three remixes from *Nacimiento*, and two experimental underground hip-hop tracks made by RE.4M and the Polemic Consortium."

How come Slowrider isn't trying to define a sound as such? "We all come from different musical and cultural backgrounds, so we bring many different influences to the table," says Gomez. "We also live in a very ethnically diverse city, where different music is pouring out of each car stereo. Thus, the mixture of different music is an everyday occurrence. The last reason is because we can. We describe it as music without any musical and lyrical borders."

Slowrider is socially active too, helping to raise money for striking farm and garment-industry workers, and playing events that support culture, Chicano/Mexican or otherwise. "We're socially active because we're part of our community," explains Gomez. "We see the injustices of the world everyday. We see it in our neighborhoods, in our schools, in inadequate housing and in the terrible quality of our grocery stores. We see the effect of poverty on hard-working people. The fact is that most people in our neighborhood do not make a liveable wage, and yet the current administration continues to spend countless amounts of dollars on imperialist terrorist acts and give tax breaks to billionaires while social programs are cut yet again. That's why a band like us has to get involved."

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

La Abeia in Highland Park, Home-style Mexican food at its best.

www.slowrider.com, www.nomadicsoundsystem.com



THE LA ISSUE

Words Peter Nicholson Images Jessica Miller

Words Peter Nicholson Images Jessica Miller

Words Peter Nicholson Image Jessica Miller



LA DOES HOUSE BETTER THAN SOME OF THE CITIES IT FIRST SPRANG FROM. HERE ARE FIVE EXPERTS WHO'VE BEEN GATHERING FOLKS IN CELEBRATION OF THIS UPLIFTING MUSIC FOR YEARS.

LA house has been a bit like Rodney Dangerfield-it gets no respect. As Marques Wyatt puts it, "As soon as I tell people a track is from LA, they go, 'What?' I can't wait for the day when we don't get a [response] like that." If recent signs are any indication, that day may soon come.

Wyatt is the scene's elder statesman, having hosted the seminal Does Your Momma Know? party for close to seven years and his current Deep night for more than four. He's seen many changes, and draws a line between the maturing of the traditionally straight rave scene and the parallel shift in house club crowds away from mixed sexual preferences to mostly hetero. Yet Wyatt is quick to acknowledge some side benefits of this demographic shift: "I have to give credit where credit is due as far as the 'second coming' of the scene. I really feel like those kids are what kept the scene going." Wyatt himself keeps

on going, in the studio as well as behind the decks, with remixes scheduled for labels Om and BBE, plus plans for an artist album.

One of those kids who made the transition from raves to clubs is Seasons Recordings's Jamie Thinnes. In 1996, his label's first single, Natural Rhythm's "Jive" EP, got immediate attention, and the international buzz set the stage for a release schedule that's included tracks from Sweden's S.U.M.O. and the UK's Freaks as well as domestic players Undercover Agency and Brett Johnson. Thinnes has also put on purposely modest events, the current incarnation being Dish. "As long as I do my little thing to give back... If you can inspire or educate a few people a week, that's what it's

Etienne Stehelin-the producer known as Rithma-hasn't let his relative youth stop him from releasing one of the year's most promising albums, *Music Fiction* (Om), a freeform blend of tech house that features his own bluesy vocals to startling effect. Quietly doing his own thing "in a little shack in Topanga Canyon," Rithma has managed to cause quite a stir with his 12"s on Tweekin' and Beau Monde.

In LA proper, despite the recent departure of partner Doc Martin, Juan Nuñez and "Little" Chris Pocino are plugging away with the Wax store, the Wax label (featuring upcoming releases from both partners) and the Wax party at the Larchmont. With such a full schedule, the pair is definitely in touch with local talent. "I've been pleasantly surprised with the amount of good stuff that has been coming out of Los Angeles," says Pocino, citing Aaron Arce, Juan Hoerni and DJ Rain as ones to watch. Nuñez himself hopes to focus more on production, and is in it for the long haul. "To be honest, this is all I've known since I was 16, and it's something I love and enjoy. To be able to make a living doing it is the biggest blessing." For his part, Pocino adds, "In the end, I just hope that Wax has done something for Los Angeles-that's the thing that would make me the most proud."

www.deep-la.com, www.seasonsrecordings.com, www.omrecords.com,

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

Marques Wyatt: That its superficial stigma is survived by transients. LA

Jamie Thinnes: Clothing designer Susan Oxenham.
Rithma: Cholada Thai restaurant on Topanga & PCH-daaamn good
Little Chris: The Commerce Casino.

### TWO BROTHERS FROM ANOTHER MOTHER TAKE OVER LA HIP-HOP.

It's interesting how two people can be so similar and yet so different. Marvin "Marvski" and Matthew "Mumbles" Fowler, sons of jazz musician Steven Fowler, grew up with music in their blood, and today they make versions of hip-hop for the new millennium that differ greatly from each other.

Marvski is a tall, muscular dude in his 30s with an easy demeanor and a big booming voice. This veteran producer/rapper/DJ moved to LA when he was a youngster, got into records and soon found a kindred spirit in a young Cut Chemist. The city's record stores have never recovered.

"We were like Bonnie and Clyde," says Marvski, "the unbreakable pair. We just went everywhere, raiding Los Angeles, whether it was parking lot sales or Rhino Records." Cut and Marv eventually hooked up with some friends of Marv's from Marshall High School, including Charlie 2na, Marc 7 and Son Doobie, and the group they formed was Unity Committee. After two years and a few failed record deals, Marvski moved on, and the remaining guys became Jurassic 5 and Funkdoobiest.

The split between Marvski and the boys was all love; they did their thing and Marv did his. Marvksi went on to be one of LA's most respected and influential DJs, and today his group Fresh Air takes hip-hop back to the essence. "The concept behind Fresh Air is that we feel hip-hop needs to sit back, take a deep breath of fresh air and get some oxygen in its lungs," Marvski explains, "because it's all dirty right now."

Mumbles is a soft-spoken, diminutive man whose moniker becomes self-evident when you get him talking. Having a different mother, he grew up apart from Marvski, but the brothers grew close over funk breaks and stolen records. "What happened was [that Matthew] was living in the Bay Area and I was in LA," recounts Marv. "So I gave him a list of records

to look for in San Francisco. He calls me back and says, 'I found like 99 percent of the stuff on this list' and I'm like, 'Damn, cool! Can you ship them to me?' And he's like, 'Let me listen to them for a while, let me check them out.' And he listens to them and says, 'I kind of like these records, I think I want to keep them.' I was like, 'You little bastard! OK, find me more copies, though.' Hence, his record collection was born."

Mumbles laughs at the mention of the story. He soon caught the production bug, and after producing a few tracks on Aceyalone's first record, *All Balls Don't Bounce*, he produced the MC's entire second album, *Book Of Human Language*, and immediately garnered accolades for his masterful instrumentals. After a few years behind the scenes and traveling abroad studying devotional music, Mumbles is back in LA and working on two projects: a solo record on Sound in Color Records and a project with another producer for Mush Records called SEVA (Spirit Evolves Via Awareness). "It's instrumental tracks interwoven with quotes from different spiritual teachers," Mumbles notes. "It creates a mood or vibe, and it takes you to different scenes." Marvski recently laid down scratches on Mumbles's first single for Sound in Color, "Preema's Dilemma," which samples a recording of their father playing flute and saxophone.

With both Fowler brothers back in the studio, it seems like the next phase of LA hip-hop may be a family affair. Stresses Marvski, "My main focal point obviously is the nitty-gritty, underground, hard-rock hip-hop. Between me, my brother, Fresh Air and whoever I end up working with. . . I gotta do this thing 'til I've made some classics. And until that happens, I won't rest"

www.thebeatmarket.com, www.soundincolor.com

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?



THE LA ISSUE
Words Peter Nicholson Image Jessica Miller
Words Rachel Swan Image Jessica Miller
Words Rachel Swan Image Jessica Miller



### HOT-WIRING EXPECTATIONS, E.L.M. PRO-DUCTIONS EXPANDS THE HORIZONS OF LA DANCEFLOORS.

Interviewing four people at the same time over the phone is damn near impossible. So founding members T.L. Smith and RD have been drafted as spokesmen for boundary-pushing electro collective Experimental Liquor Museum. Revealing the democratic (or chaotic) nature of the beast, cohorts Trichome and Ben Milstein mumble prompts and interject from the background, producing a conversation that neatly parallels E.L.M.'s freewheeling musical ethos.

When queried on how deliberate their balance is between danceable tunes and mind-fuck experimentation, the following pastiche ensues:

RD: "We always wanted to bring experimental sounds to the dancefloor-"

Smith: "Yeah, [but] it's sort of conscious and subconscious-"

RD: "It's weird-I feel like my music has gotten more experimental, but I still can't get away from

wanting to make people dance."

In short, E.L.M. seeks to stretch the limits of dance music, bringing an increasingly predictable electronic scene back to the sense of experimentation from whence it all sprang. Genre-grafting? Check. Innovation out of exasperation? Check. Poorly promoted, dodgy warehouse parties? Check. With E.L.M., the essential elements of underground research are all present and accounted for, having survived and thrived during five years of scattershot dedication.

In 1999, after being exposed to RD and T.L.'s audiovisual excesses at a party thrown by Perry Farrell (how LA!), promotion princess Sarah Chambliss became infected with the E.L.M. syndrome, which resulted in an important mutation: PAX, a promotion and management enterprise. Through PAX, E.L.M. was able to bring some impressive shows to town, including LA's first Warp Nesh event, with luminaries like Richard Devine, Jamie Liddell and Mark Bell. With their biweekly Biome series, the crew was able to further grow a scene of similarly sick individuals. As Smith shares, "We actually tell the [DJs or artists]

who come here, 'You can get as crazy as you want, you can get as dark as you possibly can-[the audience] won't get scared."

"Which was *not* the case when we first started doing this," RD immediately adds.

While members carry their own individual strains of the E.L.M. virus, one constant thread in their playlists is their connection to the evil genius minds behind Schematic Records, with whom E.L.M. have collaborated and colluded. But in examining mix artifacts like RD's Watering the Timewires and Trichome's Artilect, or evidence from Ben Milstein's live performances at the Harvest parties, one begins to appreciate that whether the pigeonhole is named dark electro, tech house, or experimental, the E.L.M. contingent manages to trace the fringes of plausibility, while never losing the plot.

www.elmconceptions.com

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

RD: A talking cat named Hella, who sings "Happy Birthday" a capella.

Ben Milstein: billydunnforfunn.com. Launch date: 2012

T.L. Smith: Zoltar the dancing robot. But I heard he took too many Duracells and is now in rehab.

# FOR PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS, HIP-HOP IS GETTING YOUR GEEK ON.

Hip-hop is an elastic term, according to People Under The Stairs's Thes One–a term with so many permutations, that it could substitute for all things funky. Ergo, sentences like "That Jazzy Jeff beat is hip-hop" and "That old lady with the crochet hat looks really hip-hop" are both plausible.

Granted, People Under the Stairs have a penchant for stretching the medium—which is to say, they're down for whatever's clever. On their latest album, ...Or Stay Tuned (Om Records), samples from children's records ("Take the Fruit") have as much currency as an SP-12 drum machine ("Drumbox"). "We're not trying to sound like a throwback," says Thes. "We use drum breaks and crusty, funky samples, because for us, hip-hop is raw. It's not about clean sounds or new fangled equipment."

What's most consistent about People Under the Stairs, however, is their likeable oddballism: these are guys whose ideal Saturday night involves record crates, an MPC, and enough caffeinated soda to seriously get their geek on. People Under the Stairs aren't typical hip-hop hustlers, and they've always had a lo-fi way of doing business. Thes One started his career working the register at

Rhino Records in LA, where he'd obsessively alphabetize vinyl during his lunch break. Double K is one of those DJs who never has to practice. In fact, he didn't own a pair of turntables until after People Under the Stairs dropped their first album, *The Next Step* (Step One), in 1998.

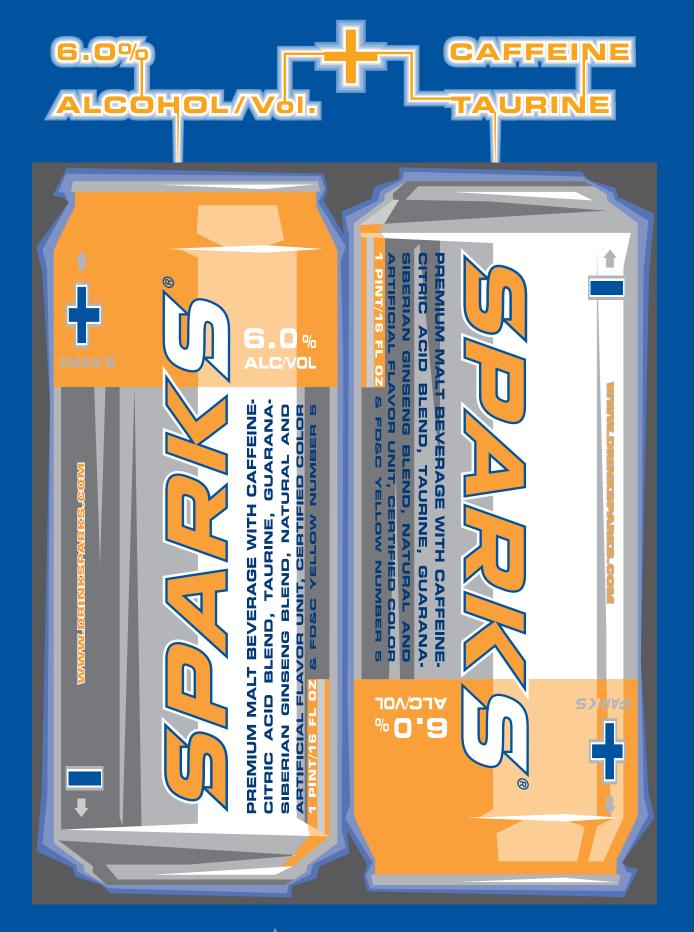
Perhaps it's weird-maybe even a little nerdy-for Double K to have recorded all the scratches on the duo's first album using other people's turntables (because he didn't own any at the time), or for Thes One to rave about his 1986 Atari stand-up game console with an ardor that other rappers would reserve for, well, four glocks with 21 shots. But nerdiness is part of the group's appeal. For his next project, Thes One plans to press up super-limited recordings like his 2002 beat battle with Will from Black Eyed Peas. "I'm talking rare-ass collector shit, stuff that's handwritten by *me*. It would be like a rare hip-hop fashion boutique." As for the future, he also hopes to record an album of tracks from '70s commercials that are all composed by a single guy in Montana. Bizarre, fo' sho"-but that's hip-hop.

### www.peopleunderthestairs.net

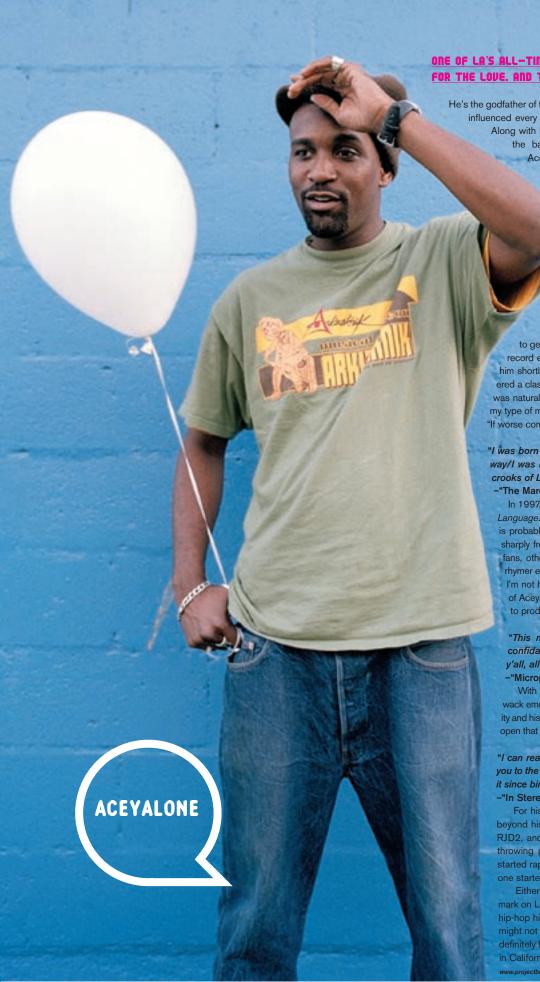
### WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

What 3 DAS BESTACET SECRET?
I am time and again surprised at how many Angelenos don't know about Phillipe's [near Union Station in down-town LA]. You'll catch me upstairs holdin' down fort with a self-made Arnold Palmer and a double-dip turkey. Oh yeah, I can't sleep on the homemade boysenberry pie.





# JUMP START THE NICHT



ONE OF LA'S ALL-TIME ILLEST MCS, ACEY IS STILL DOING IT FOR THE LOVE. AND THE HATE.

check at all"

He's the godfather of the West Coast underground. He spawned a style that's influenced every indie rap artist in existence, from Anticon to Anti-Pop.

Along with his group Freestyle Fellowship and a little showcase in

the back of a health food store called Project Blowed,
Aceyalone and crew revolutionized the sound of West
Coast rap, bringing about a lyrical renaissance in South
Central LA that continues to this day.

After two albums in the early '90s, Freestyle Fellowship (Aceyalone, P.E.A.C.E., Mikah Nine and Self Jupiter) went their separate ways. Between 1995 and 2003, Aceyalone

released four solo albums, each unique in sub-

ject matter, style and sound.

"If it wasn't for a mic check, I wouldn't have a

-"Mic Check," from All Balls Don't Bounce

Aceyalone was actually the second Fellowship member to get signed by Capitol–Mikah Nine was the first–but only his record ever saw the light of day. Even though his label dropped him shortly after All Balls Don't Bounce debuted, it's still considered a classic by serious hip-hop fans. Acey recalls, "I just did what was natural. They didn't know what to do with an artist like me and my type of music." But losing his label didn't make him lose his focus. "If worse comes to worst, I press up my CDs, I go out and sell them."

"I was born in a concrete jungle and I learned to make my own way/I was raised by streets and the beats and the books and crooks of LA"

-"The March," from Book Of Human Language

In 1997, Aceyalone released his second album, *Book Of Human Language*. This collaboration between Acey and producer Mumbles is probably his most dense and difficult work to date. It departed sharply from *All Balls*, and while it went over the heads of some fans, others marveled at its genius. "I'm a dynamic person," the rhymer explains. "I don't want to be closed up in one type of shell. I'm not here to please you so we can be in one little cozy corner of Aceyalone music. I don't want a cult of followers relying on me to produce the same thing. I don't believe in that."

"This microphone is my weapon/This microphone is my confidant/This microphone is my magical wand/to make all y'all, all y'all, I mean all y'all respond"

-"Microphones," from Accepted Eclectic

With 2001's Accepted Eclectic, Aceyalone issued a warning to wack emcees and naysayers everywhere. He embraced his creativity and his growth as an artist. "I accept the fact that I'm eclectic. Let's open that door. Let me be an artist, let me be wild and do what I do."

"I can really rip a rapper for whatever it's worth/And introduce you to the greatest show on earth/Oh it's beautiful, isn't it? I had it since birth/And it feels so incredible when I'm puttin in work." -"In Stereo," from Love & Hate

For his latest album, Acey flips the script yet again, reaching beyond his immediate crew to work with producers like El-P and RJD2, and rappers like Priest and M. Saayid. Aceyalone enjoys throwing people for a loop. "Some people got mad because I started rapping slow. I started rapping slow again because everyone started rapping fast."

Either way, Acey and Project Blowed's impact has made its mark on Los Angeles, and they'll always have an important part in hip-hop history. "I'm from LA, born and raised," says Aceyalone. "I might not be the prettiest part, but everything has its purpose. We definitely have our purpose, as to where we fit in this puzzle, in LA, in California, in hip-hop period."

THE LA ISSUE Words DJ Anna Image Cut Chemist Words Vivian Host Image Jessica Miller

### CUT CHEMIST TALKS ABOUT TWO OF HIS **FAVORITE PALS.**

Lucas McFadden, a.k.a. Cut Chemist, is a man with many passions. An amazing DJ and producer, Cut Chemist's star has been slowly rising for years. He is half the DJ force behind the rap group Jurassic 5 and his Brainfreeze and Product Placement projects with DJ Shadow have sparked many imitators. Next year will see the release of his highly anticipated debut solo album on Warner Brothers. But in addition to his records, his MPC-60 and his Star Wars action figures, Cut has another love-his dogs. Here he talks for the first time publicly about the pups behind the man.

XLR8R: So, you have two beautiful dogs? Cut Chemist: The best.

XLR8R: Belgia and ...? CC: Chewbacca. Xavier Elgin Chewbacca.

XLR8R: A.K.A.? CC: Chewie.

### XLR8R: Tell me a little bit about their backgrounds.

CC: She's a Belgian Sheepdog. She came from a long line of show dogs, so the person we bought her from wanted to keep her in that kind of curriculum. So I think they were a little bit stubborn about selling her to us, because we're not a show dog family. It's the kind of thing where they name her.

XLR8R: She has a fancy four-word name? CC: Exactly.

### XLR8R: Like Champion Sir Lady of the Alps?

CC: Yeah, but it had to start with a "B" because she was the second generation or something-I don't know, but it had to start with a "B." It was like Blazing Star or something. No, Belgius A. Corker is her full name... because she kind of has this funny cross-eyed look when you look at her.

### XLR8R: Damn!

CC: Belgius is a corker, so we call her Belgia, or Bellise, Bells for short. We've had her ever since she was a few weeks old. Chewbacca we found on the street. We think he's part Akita.

He may have belonged to a junkyard owner because he would sleep on the roof of the car that used to be in the backyard. You know, junkyard dogs are really territorial and mean, and he was like that at first. He growled at Will Dog [from Ozomatli] all the time, and he bit Soup [Zaakir from J5] in the ass. Broke the skin, I think.

### XLR8R: What are some of your most memorable Chewie or Belgia moments?

CC: Chewie hates to get his nails clipped, so this veterinarian, who's an extremist, she comes over with a muzzle, and muzzles Chewie while she does his nails. He doesn't like that, but he takes it like a man. "Cool, muzzle me, whatever." [The vet] clips his nails, grrr, then she's done, takes the muzzle off, fine, [she thinks] it's cool. [Chewie] waits for my mom to leave. Oh boy. He bit [the vet's] arm, subdued her and waited for his master's orders like, "Can I tear her apart?"

XLR8R: What?! CC: Blood everywhere.

XLR8R: Holy shit! CC:Yeah, attacked the

shit out of her. I'm

in the next

room

hear is arghhh ahhhhh, and I'm in my room like "Bitch shouldn't have muzzled him." So anyway, that's done, I guess she was like, "OK, that was the wrong thing to do." Two, three, four months go by and she comes back, kicks it, Chewie's cool, comes up to her, fine. About an hour later, my mom goes to get coffee...he attacks her again. Dude, he was a devious motherfucker because he waited! He was like, "No, it's all good," and then, "No, it's not." Blood everywhere. She never came back again.

### XLR8R: Yeah!

CC: But it's good to know that Chewie has that in him, because he's a softie, a total ice cream puff,

Belgius A. Corker, up in the cut

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

### LOS ANGELES'S DRUM & BASS SOLDIERS HOLD IT DOWN.

It's impossible to talk about Los Angeles's drum & bass scene without mentioning Junglist Platoon. The outfit has consistently been the bedrock of a scene typically characterized by a high DJ-turnover rate and sketchy upstart promoters. Moreover, the crew has proved that there's still a huge market for banging, cantankerous, roughneck drum & bass. "They all play different shit," says Platoon member No Face of his DJ cohorts Clutch, Scooba, and Machete, "but it's always straight dancefloor."

The Platoon-which consists of nine core members and a legion of support staff-grew out of a friendship between Clutch, Scooba, No Face and figurehead Machete, who used to go to raves together starting in 1993. The four began DJing and, fed up with low-quality events, eventually started promoting parties, leading to the formation of their long-running Thursday night club, Respect, in March 1999. The club still packs them in every week and provides constant inspiration to keep going. "There's a huge need for what we do in the LA scene." says Machete. "We found our niche with Respect and we've done it well."

"Yeah," agrees Platoonist Justin Ford. "Last week, I didn't even feel like going. Then by midnight it was like, 'Insert drink here. Insert crowd here.' And it was jumping, and there was nowhere else I wanted to be but right there."

Ford says that the cooperative's high standards have been the secret to their success. "We try to keep focused on what's important," he says. "From day one, we said we were going to have dope DJs. And there were no sacrifices. We got a lot of shit for not booking everybody just because they were from LA."

"At times, our educated discretion has been confused for us being elitist," concurs Machete, who diplomatically handles the club's bookings and their ensuing politics. Fellow members handle graphic design duties and the website, and No Face and Paul Boutin spend most of their time in the crew's Echo Park studio, crafting tracks under the name By Design. The septet even has canny branding, having produced lighters, signs, limited edition t-shirts and a special pair of Respect logo shoes with skate company És.

Though the crew for the most part eschews the combative vibe and militant aesthetic that LA's drum & bass scene is known for, one trapping of the jungle soldier attitude remains. "We still rock camo," says Ford. "But you don't have to salute at the door."



THE LA ISSUE Words Carleton Curtis



### SOUNDING-OFF WITH FOUR OF LA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL UNDERGROUND RADIO PER-SONALITIES.

Zigging and zagging its way through the thick, coffee-colored air of Los Angeles is a small, but formidable group of independent radio waves. In a city where major labels and platinum records reign supreme, underground radio stations like KCRW, KPFK, KUCI and KXLU are playing anything but the top of the pops. "Diversity is such a buzzword, but underground radio definitely offers choice," says KPFK 90.7 DJ Kristi Lomax, who contrasts such choice to commercial radio's homogenous, billings-driven complexion. KPFK's deep house queen also emphasizes the importance of formatting, a liberty that LA's richly populated underground radio community does not take for granted. "Hip-hop isn't relegated to the late-night hours," she attests, "and world music isn't some Saturday afternoon loungey thing."

Blessed with a larynx that would give Barry White an inferiority complex, DJ Garth Trinidad of KCRW 89.9 has been seducing Angelenos with his "Chocolate City" show since 1996. Hugely popular by independent radio standards, Trinidad hosts over 70,000 listeners each weeknight with a creamy blend of exclusively African-rooted music. "Los Angeles is probably the best place in the world for underground radio," says the selector, whose playlist ranges from Dwele to Cinematic Orchestra. But LA's commercial radio is an entirely different animal, according to KFPK's Lomax: "To be located in the music capital of the world, LA radio just isn't doing its job. There's no risk-taking or experimentation going on."

Ardem Jermakian, Music Director at UC Irvine's KUCI 88.9, disagrees. "I hate to say it, but larger alterna-stations like KROQ are actually playing decent music these days." Although spinning mainstream music is against KUCI's policy, Jermakian takes pride in noting that the station helped launch the careers of Orange County bands like No Doubt and Sublime. "Underground radio seems to be on the uprise in Los Angeles." he coos.

Most militant of all LA underground DJs is KXLU 88.9's Mike Nardone, who professes to blocking out local radio of all forms. "Ninety-nine percent of everything on radio is unimaginative," seethes Nardone. "J-Rocc's Fantastic Four show on Power 106 is the only show that's worth listening to." Nardone, who is arguably the most respected underground hip-hop DJ in the country, has hosted KXLU's seminal We Came From Beyond show since November of 1988—an institution which just released its second compilation of the same name. "We Came From Beyond, Vol. 2 is a collection of lesser-known hip-hop artists that I think are from a vibrant and viable scene," says the father of two.

In a similar vein, while the DJs of LA underground radio preserve their own vibrant and viable scene, they don't indulge in factionalism. "Everyone in this article are heroes of mine," acknowledges Trinidad, "and I hope they support me right back."

KXLU-FM 88.9-www.kxlu.com KUCI-FM 88.9 (Orange County)-www.kuci.org KCRW-FM 89.9-www.kcrw.org KDEK-EM 90.7-www.kcrw.org

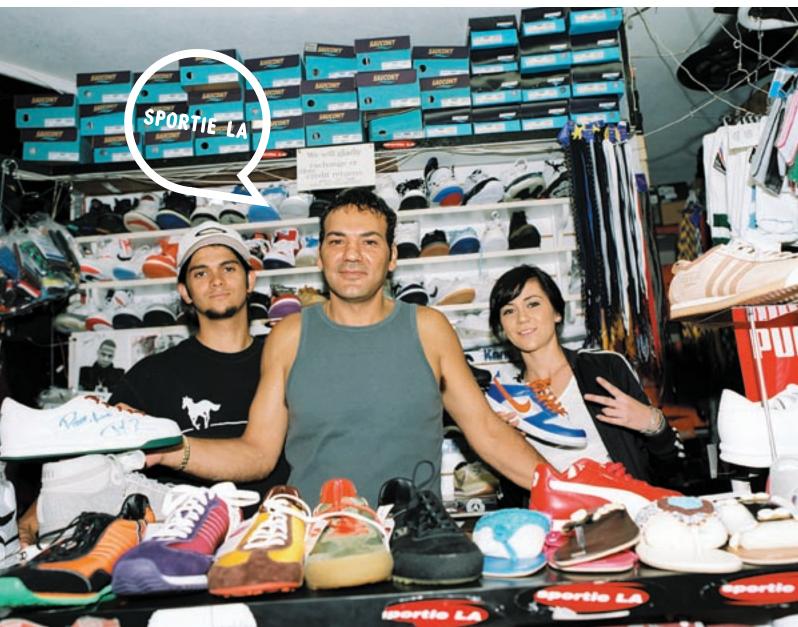
WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

WHAI'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?
Mike Nardone: The Hip-Hop Show. It's a music video show on KJLA-TV
Ardem Jermakian: The Alterknit Lounge at the Knitting Factory
Garth Trinidad: If it's that good, I have to keep it a secret.
Kristi Lomax: My bi-monthly club called Our House at the Wonder Bar.
Deep house actually exists in LA-you just have to try real hard to find it.





THE LA ISSUE
Words Lennox Hill Image Jessica Miller Words Garrett Kamps Image Zen Sekizaw



# WAITING ON YOU HAND AND FOOT, SHOE STORE SPORTIE LA IS TRULY MELROSE'S PLACE.

As any good archeologist or seasoned crate-digger will tell you, 90% of the fun of finding that rare bone is the dig itself. Excavating that right pair of kicks is no different. Human nature, however, has taught far too many people to look at the last page of the novel and flock to "concept" stores that sell ten pairs of the same shoe and the occasional ricket-inducing reissue of the week. If the thought of mass-produced Holy Grails are making you feel a bit *soled* out, fear not: there's still a place to explore.

Book-ending the Melrose shopping district is Sportie LA, and like most cornerstones of Los Angeles it's a welcomed contradiction. Its unpretentious, somewhat anonymous-looking storefront has managed to make it both a well-kept secret, yet globally famous among those in the know. At any given time, one can see diehard trainer geeks, a free-spending Jay-Z, and casuals just looking for a cheap pair of shelltoes. Sportie packs a staggering amount considering its 20-odd-square-foot area. Cramped walls-with sometimes dusty, often dated point-of-purchase displays-exhibit current classics and rare imports, while piles of deadstock make up a good portion of floor space.

Just as intriguing as the store itself is co-founder

Eli Amzaleg, who can often be seen working behind the counter. Octopus-like in his handling of simultaneous telephone requests, he shouts out shoe sizes to whoever is within range, all from a mental knowledge of stock that borders on autism. Despite how frantic this may seem at the time, he still manages to gracefully field odd requests from shoppers. Feed him "Reebok 'Billy'," "red Stan Smith" or "import Dunk," and you'll quickly get a "sold out yesterday," "lace or velcro?" or "pick your country."

Sportie LA is located at 7753 Melrose Avenue; www.sportiela.com

WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

# SMUGGLING MELODY ACROSS THE BORDERS OF SYNTHETIC NOISE, LANGUIS IS DEALING POP LACED WITH IDM. WE'RE SORRY WE HAD TO BE THE NARC.

"As far as I'm concerned, nothing really inspires me about LA," says Marco Chloca, one-half of the duo Languis. "It's not like we go driving through the Hollywood hills and admire the view and get influenced by that or the beach," adds Alejandro Cohen, the other half of a band that's been creating and performing its music amidst the smog and drain of the city for five years.

It's funny to hear them say that, since Languis's sound glows with a synthetic sheen that seems all too characteristic of LA. On its most recent release, 2002's *Untied*, gentle melodies nestle beneath crackling noise-scapes, vintage Casio patches dance with plucked acoustic guitars, and the duo takes turns layering breathy vocals in between synth sweeps and bubbly percussion like the purples, pinks, and oranges of a smog-infected Southland sunset. The direct descendent of Aphex Twin's *Selected Ambient Works* 85-92-with an extended family that includes everyone from Hrvätski to the Beach Boys-Languis's music swirls with fizzy textures and blurred, impressionistic melodies. Nevertheless, the boys-who migrated to LA from Argentina in 1996-insist that their sound is primarily pop.

"[Even] in abstraction," says Chloca, "I always hear melodies that I like. I don't realize how experimental a piece is until I listen to it several months later. When

we finished *Untied*, to me it was a pretty pop record—until I listened to the whole thing after we mixed it and I realized, 'Oh, this is pretty ambient.' Even when it's very experimental, I'm still thinking in terms of pop music."

"When we say 'pop music," clarifies Cohen, "it doesn't have to be top-ten. It means what we all understand in terms of melody and chords, and stuff like that."

Languis's melodic qualities—the duo's knack for hiding tunes like Easter eggs amidst glitch-stitch—distinguish them from their more technical brethren. Whether they're prepared to admit it or not, such covert methods tie their sound to the city they live in: amidst the prosthetics and the makeup, the noise of the traffic and the "non-stop parade of delusion" (to quote comedian David Cross), there is a harmony humming beneath Los Angeles, something Languis and its peers have been lucky enough to tap into.

"Maybe the city itself is not an influence on us," says Chloca, "but our group of friends are, what they listen to and the music they make."

"Most of the stuff that comes out of Hollywood is pretty bad," points out Cohen, "so we're pretty lucky for having DJ Nobody or Dntel or Dublab. I feel that they are actually the best ones in the city."

Hey guys, don't forget to add yourselves to that list.

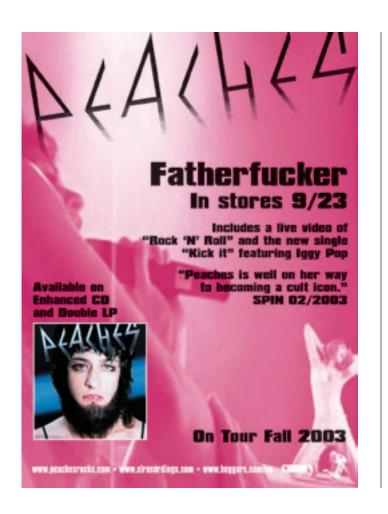
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WHAT'S LA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET?

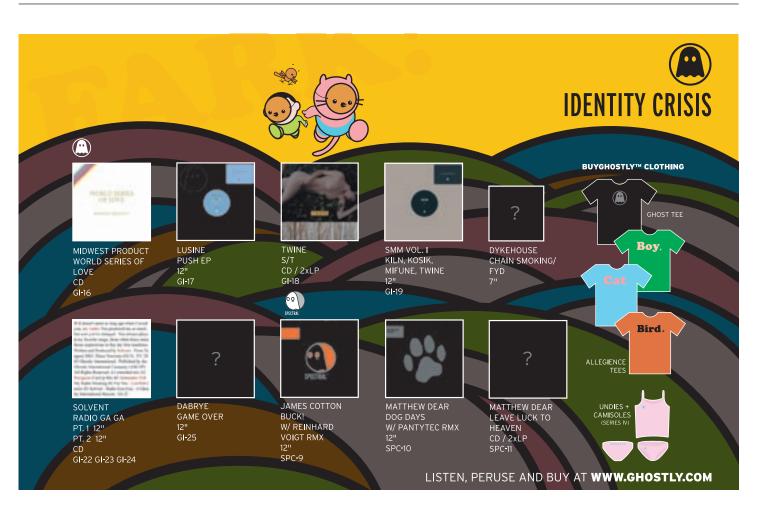
Late night eats at Rick's Tacos on Walnut Boulevard in Pasadena



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"Or you'll be one of those seven MCs..."

-Eric B. and Rakim, from "I Ain't No Joke" on Paid In Full, 1987

The timeless words of Rakim Allah still reverberate, even in an era of bulletproof vest-wearing, self-proclaimed pimp rappers. But who among the legions of underground hip-hop artists could come up with classic "patterns of paragraphs" to move the crowds today? We gathered seven MCs, put them in a line, and told them to take ten paces and begin to rhyme. Well, actually, we took a close listen at their latest albums to see whether it's worth handing out cigars to any of these generation-next hip-hoppers.

Without exception, these seven artists represent variations on the so-called "true school" hip-hop theme. Which is to say, their emphasis is on lyrics and lyrical skills, their beats are often sparse and minimal, and their topics tend toward conscious sentiments. Yet they seem to recognize it's not enough to simply evoke the fabled '88-'92 period, a Golden Age of indie hip-hop whose influence runs deep through today's breed of microphone fiends.

While a connection with hip-hop tradition is a must for any "real MC," it's equally important to be progressive. It may seem clichéd for Raw

Produce to have a track dissing "wack MCs," but they push things forward with tracks featuring Mr. Lif and Mike Ladd. It's also perfectly acceptable for C-Rayz Walz to rep the Bronx, because he's got more punch-lines than Comedy Central. "Raps collapse your ear with stacks of wax," he boasts on "Guns and Butter," while his "Thug Melody" might be the closest Def Jux has come to Wu-Tang-esque street cred.

Babbletron suggests a robot with runaway syntax, which isn't far from the truth. Lyrically reminiscent of Pharaoh Monch and Cannibal Ox, with beats supplied by MF Doom and RJD2, these kids should do well with fans of Aesop Rock. Konfident, meanwhile, comes out of nowhere [actually, outta the San Fernando Valley, which is pretty close-Ed] and disappears into the night like a ninja. Who is this kid? A lyrical assassin, that's all. "I wouldn't chance it/I position toys like a praying mantis," he spits on "Here It Is," over a beat that's closer to vintage 45 King than contemporary Hot 97.

Going back to (Southern) Cali, Otherwize makes a good point with his opus, "Rappers Are Replaceable." Coming from the heart, he takes it back to 1984 ("We on the back on the bus/with no relations/shelltoe Adidas with no laces") then gets all Afrofuturistic on "Nature of the Negro." This is some next-level shit coming from the LA underground, but is anyone tryna hear it? That's the question, indeed.

"I was tagging my name on the wall while y'all were hiding behind the obvious," Exile & Lokey say on "Pebble," which could be a metaphor for where underground hip-hop's at—and why it's not going anywhere. "MC's put up your titles/I'll be grabbin' 'em soon," swears Brother Ali. Suffice to say that if these seven artists can not only express themselves through rhymes, but make dope albums, then Rakim's work was not in vain. Eric K. Arnold



Novamute/M-nus/US/CD Many thought Richie Hawtin had taken austere, bass-centered techno as far as possible with 1998's Consumed. Guess again. Closer delves vet deeper into the Roland 303's innards; it's a 75that Hawtin's devoted fans should ardently embrace. Scattered throughout Plastikman's fifth album is Hawtin's internal monopgue-pitched down to a sinister slur-questioning the place in the universe. These vords match the kind of leak ambience, off-kilter eats and bass-saturated hrob that make Germany's Voigt brothers (of experimental label Mille Plateaux) econd half features more floor-friendly 4/4 rhythms, out this has to be the least uphoric dance music ever conceived. Closer's grimly ominous tone seems to reflect a troubled mind, but one that's still wringing maximum creativity from a minimalist palette. Dave Segal



### FEED THE CAT Giant Step/UK/CD

is New Forms was to drum & bass in 997, so Feed The Cat is to broken beat n 2003. Like Roni Size, West London's Kaidi Tatham (a.k.a. Agent K) is his scene's most classically minded head, a roducer whose album wears its fusion-

iazz influence proudly on its sleeve. Tatham's sultry LP (first released last year in England) delivers handsomely on the promise of its singles, as the boardsman drips cascading keys and honeyed vocal refrains over a bed of prickly polyrhythmic tines. Indeed, dancing to these tunes is like sleeping on a bed of nails-tricky and euphoric all at once Martin Turenne

### NEIGHBORHOOD SCIENCE

From the slamming sci-funk of "I Can Be" to the smoothly clicking broken house of "Get Yourself Together," Arnold absolutely kills it on this debut long-player. Calling on the bounty of talent from around the block in Detroit, he enlists Ayro, Amp Fiddler and others to help out on an album that reveals the potential of true fusion, not mere linservice pastiche. While there's plenty of busted beat programming (check the shifting stutter-stop of "Broken"), it never sinks into a contrarian exercise, always keeping a tight focus on a flowing musicality that unites the entire project. Truly brilliant! Peter Nicholson

### CONFESSIONS OF A SOUL DIGGER Out Of The Loop/UK/CD

With his classical training, natural flair for jazz and experience with electronic grooves. Danish master Cai has already managed to create some eyebrow-raising singles ("The Ghetto," "Silver N Jazz"). On Confessions... he brings a whole album's worth of lovely jazzy soulful joints to the table-some downtempo and charming, others shufflesome and eclectic. There's a pleasant cover of Stevie

Wonder's "Black Maybe" which-along with a few other cuts-features the seductive vocals of Miss Malone, but this is mostly about Cai's heartfelt tanestries Paul Sullivan

### SPAZ THE WORLD

### Zebra Traffic/UK/CD

"Unpolished" doesn't always mean an album is worth pawning at the local shop, and Nottingham's 23-year old Cappo proves this on his long-awaited debut album. His raw, British-English lyrics get a little

production help from the P Brothers, so that Spaz the World becomes an accumulation of gritty kick-drums and hefty basslines that match the razor-sharp feel of Cappo's voice. It's a wild trip that moves down Nottingham's darkest alleyways before getting thrown back into reality by soulful melodies on tracks like "Learn to be Strong." Spaz or not, one thing is certain; the world is his. Jenn Marston

### MIRRORS AND WINDOWS

### Stoned Asia/CD/UK

Sasha Crnobrnia, co-founder of NY's Organic Grooves, may have come from Switzerland, but his heart (and ear) lies in Istanbul. Eastern scales created from tatters and cut-ups of old records flow onto a dub canvas in a successful example of cultural globalism. There's nothing metallic or angular here, as tracks sway and melt under layers of melody. While the occasional melodic motif strikes as a bit simple in counterpoint to its tripped-out underpinnings, the work as a whole is an enjoyable hookah-inspired dream. Joe Rice

DJ Olive's Bodega is the sound of the barrio rewired and recontextualized, a genre-defying mash-up encompassing everything from brash Latin horn solos to twangy spaghetti Western guitar riffs to reverberating dub basslines. Not at all what one would expect from an avant-garde turntablist who's collaborated with names like Sonic Youth's Kim Gordon and free jazz legend John Zorn, but it's an irresistibly funky and fresh collection of backyard bangers all the same. The end result is blended seamlessly in the style of a block-partyrocking mix disc. Muy sabroso! Brock Phillips



### **EMULATORY WHOREDOM** theAariculture/US/CD

A part of NYC's illbient downtempo hipnop scene for almost a decade, DJ Wally continues to explore the now-forgotten extures of stoney trip-hop. A shade ore developed through the use of more spoken-word samples, the beats limp

lethargically through almost 20 tracks, caught between sluggish ambience, non-conceptual samples and very gentle breaks. "Stringsnsthings" at least lunges with big-beat bravado and a seething, stringy atmosphere, while "Yes It's True" has a pleasant skittishness. Devoid of attitude or innovation. Emulatory Whoredom



he Cincinnati crew of producer/MC at Jon. MC/producer Pase Rock and MCs Sonic and Kyle David, Five Deez akes its name from the fifth dimension that of soul. With their sophomore domestic full-length. Kinkvnasti, the

four black dudes" take their craft from spiritual to spirited. Perhaps influenced by his recent collaboration with Stefan "Pole" Betke, Fat Jon's production is more crisply focused. Tracks are string-swept and disco-y, but not overly orchestrated, working almost in modules. Beats crackle and echo a little around the edges, but remain firmly rooted, never tripping over each other. The same can be said of the lyrical acrobatics, which never overshadow the musicality. Mixing Zen-like Eastern composure with Western street strut, Five Deez has worked out the kinks on

### SOULHACK

### CAN'T HOLD BACK

Sonar Kollectiv/GER/CD

This pair of albums effectively displays Jazzanova's Sonar Kollectiv label's incredible breadth and depth, encompassing darkly melodic, restrained and

surprisingly heartfelt machine music with Forss's Soulhack, and loose-limbed electronic funk from Georg Levin. Forss's album is the more introspective of the two, pairing sweeping melodic lines and distorted beats with lush synths and skittering bass. Levin's is more straightforward-he swings easily from lazy jazz to retro-futuristic soul (with the ubiquitous hit "You Know What You Want But You Won't Get It.") Either way, the results are impressive and decidedly

### JUST A LITTLE BIT CRAZY

### Far Out/UK/CD

No Astrud Gilberto, Joyce's 24 albums as a performer and songwriter balanced her wide-ranged vocal talent with bossa rhythms and added a welcome feminist voice to Brazilian music-something revolutionary at the time of her 1968 debut. Her latest is a playful album, soft and lilting, as birdsong woodwinds soar and dodge her dusky voice in light-hearted counterpoint. Joined by Brazilian percussionist Robertinho Silva and legendary drummer Tutty Moreno, she brought in Bugge Wesseltoft from Norway to add his own tilt to the combo, resulting in sly sci-fi touches that provide currency to timeless arrangements. Her reinterpretation of "A Hard Day's Night" as a summery lullaby is one of many standouts. Joe Rice

### TAKE MY DRUM TO ENGLAND Grand Central/UK/CD

Stockport native Kennedy makes it clear that his heart remains with his drum kit on this debut album. The mix of rock-style hihats and snares, as well as the funky tom-toms show off his musical background and bring a complex, intelligent rhythm to each track. How fortunate, then, that the drum is only one small piece of this musical collage, which exceeds the boundaries of predictable songwriting. An added bonus are the layers of guitars, flutes and pianos that sound like Layo and Bushwacka and the members of Zero 7 locked in a closet together with an acoustic quitar. And that makes for an album definitely worth checking out. Jenn Marston



### SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE DJS Vinia Tune/UK/CD

By any definition, Eric San a.k.a. Kid coala is an iconoclast, so his newest joint on Ninja Tune is all about celebratng singularity. Eschewing conventional structures, liner notes and time signaures, Some of My Best Friends are DJs

is a showcase for his ambition and humor, filled equally with instructional samples, jazz riffs, comedic interludes-including a hilarious comic book insert designed by San himself-and, of course, mindexpanding beats. San doesn't obfuscate like fellow Ninja Amon Tobin or mood-groove like DJ Shadow, but he still sticks out from the turntablist set like a sore thumb. Which is reason alone to grab this shit and spin it. Scott Thill

### Zuma/US/CD

Killing Joke would be way trendier if they were doing now what they did in 1981. They don't sound old. Maybe that's the problem. They're on the modern industrial metal tip now, likely influenced by the bands KJ itself influenced (even Dave Grohl sits in on drums) Frontman Jaz Coleman continues to summon revolt, gargling vociferations about asteroidal apocalypse, genetic tampering, pollution, bombs and "the Western way." There's enough prowess that the two of you still into the aggro thing will like it. Those trying to forget there's still a war on won't. Liz Cordinglev

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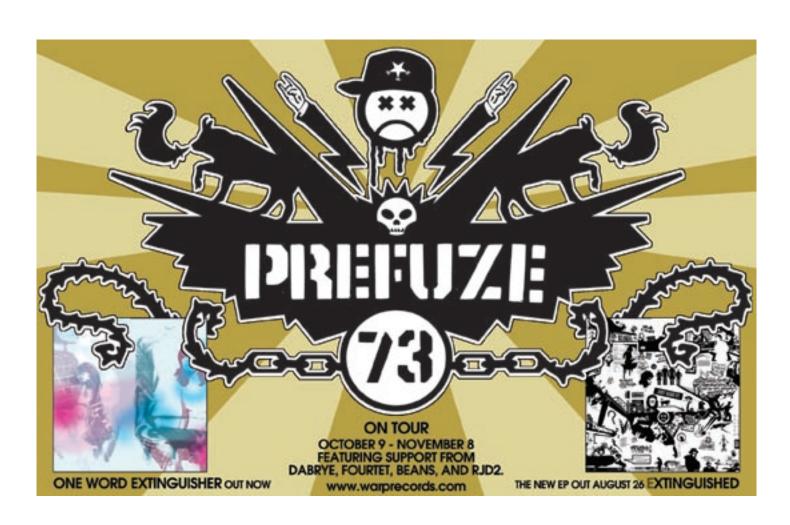
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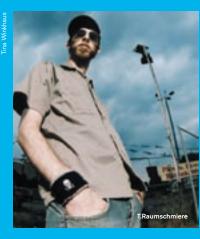
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### REVIEWS ALBUMS



# RADIO BLACKOUT

Novamute/US/CD
With its lavender eyeliner melting in the harsh sunlight of reality, electroclash-electronic music's dandy Dorian Gray-has moved into the old folk's home. The kids these days are all souped on Suicide, as they embrace their new boldfaced, zeitgeist commodifying label, "electro-punk." While T. Raumschmiere may not be the high profile scene leader needed for maximum media saturation, his original bass-belting electronic techno-punk convinced Miss Kittin to drop da Housecat off at the vet and yell all over the sultural, grabbing "The Game is Not Over." *Radio* Blackout forges a fairly convincing testament to these energetic possibilities, with flurries of percussion and bazookalike blitzkriegs of sub-gravity frequencies, it's so fucking punk rock that promo copies were burn-proof. Expect a Ministry of Sound electro-punk compilation soon. Brion Paul



### RESPONSE

### Kanzleramt/GER/CD

German techno superstar Kowalski hit the dance-mag trifecta last year-showing, placing and winning in any number of categories ranging from Best Newcomer to Best Remixer. Response was created for Kowalski's live sets, and beta testing

round the world seems to guarantee another winner, especially with the Brazilian-flavored best-seller "Belo Horizonte" Response has something for everyone-pop ("Lock Me Up"), an atmospheric and anthemic club tune ("Response"), and even a bonus moody track for sedentary listening ("Prevail"). Margaret Murray

### I KAMANCHI Full Cycle/UK/CD

bass world. Krust and Die's chemistry, built on some of the most innovative, hard-hitting drum & bass, valiantly finds a balance between the crossover cut and the dancefloor filler. I Kamanchi

gracefully flows between accessible, hook-laden tunes where the bass and drums share the stage with the vocals, and serious bangers, like "Circus" and "Ultimate," where the tempo never relents. Hot new vocalist Tali laces the highlight single "Hold It Down" with the requisite diva punch, harnessing Krust and Die's sonic chaos. Jon Weldon

Certainly two heads are better than one in the insular drum &

### LAZYFISH AND ALEXANDR

### K20/GFR/CD

Rather suspiciously, one of these producer's names has "fish" in it, perhaps slyly suggesting the origin of this overtly aquatic music for mermaids, mermen and dolphin/pirate hybrids who spend at least 80% of their time submerged at daring, deep-sea depths Underwater living never seemed so aurally appealing as on OS, with the massaging ambient kelp forests of "Pink-Blue," the dense oxygen-bubble blanket of thudding melodic IDM shards on "Wo Yow," or the shimmering sunken treasures of "Sokol" (with special

underwater Theremin!). Go on, spend some time submerged with the mermaids. Brion Paul



## SCRYPT

### Thrill Jockey/US/CD

These discs spotlight the prodigious talents of Mouse On Mars's Jan St. Werner and Oval's Markus Popp (the two collaborate as Microstoria). Scrvpt

is Werner's third and finest outing as Lithops. In this outrageously labyrinthine maze of tweaked beats, liquid electronics, and elusive melody, Werner creates eccentric sonic environments that teem with activity. The music is alternately beautiful and primordially funky. Brilliant stuff. Popp's new project, So, is a collaboration with Japanese vocalist Eriko Toyoda. As Oval, Popp has created some preternaturally lovely (albeit fractured) music in the past; but the sheer, broken beauty of So still comes as a surprise. The mix of Popp's dense, serpentine electronics with Toyoda's childlike vocals is alchemic, as Toyoda's subtle, drifting pop gets a liberal dose of Popp's much vaunted Ovalprocess software technique Susanna Bolle

### SILVER OCEAN

### Disorient/HK/CD

Japanese musical master Yashudi Ide touches down on Disorient. with a magical collection of spiritually aware grooves. Bringing in a wealth of talent, Yashudi adds his own perspective to timeless cuts and presents new, innovative tracks. "Ain't No Sunshine" finds Ken Boothe and U-Roy lamenting the loss of a lover, alongside powerful reggae-flavored horns. "Soul Galactic" features Osunlade, who dreams of paradise as tender keys and convincing chords meet. "Wishing On A Star" is an apologetic vocal escapade, with dreamy keys and stirring live bass. Silver Ocean is a dive into a cleansing deep sea of musical discovery. Jon Freer

### WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN

When they were signed to Tummy Touch, Los Chicharrons were a boisterous two-man party, inclined towards funky shenanigans and cheeky Latin licks. With this third LP on their own label, they've seemingly transformed into an introspective downtempo act. The elongated arrangements, soulfully slick grooves and warm, supine vibes they've embraced here aren't original enough to stand up as staggering works of genius, but the beats and songwriting are of a decent caliber. Fans may be relieved when the second half of the LP reverts back to their usual madcap antics. Paul Sullivan

### BI ACKOUT

### Boiling Point/US/CD

I'm unphased by J-Zone's semen jokes and Lil' Kim's garrulous sexuality. But Maspyke's lyrics give me pause-maybe because they treat raps as political screeds rather than filthy speech forums. Ergo, Maspyke's rhymes pound harder than other rappers'. As stalwarts of the Nation of Islam, Maspyke have a penchant for contrarian politics and spiritual homilies-like Wu-Tang Clan, they're prone to cavalierly diss queer folks ("Lost in Belief"), flout the get-money ethos of their hip-hop peers (every song on the album), and impart rap sermons about the laws of Allah (" $54^{\rm th}$ Regiment"). Consistently headnodic, Blackout is, nonetheless, intellectually rigorous. Rachel Swan



### DUB THE MIGHTY DRAGON NoFuture/UK/CD

On paper, the Meteorites sound awesome-dancehall-flecked British pop influenced by the Neptunes-but the reality is quite another story. They're more like an '80s-new wave reaction to the aforementioned names. Their

debut's crisp, synthesized production lacks both dancehall's punch and the Neptunes's sharpness, while the vocals strain for quirky. offbeat pop hooks á la Pharrell's NERD stuff, but don't really swing r yearn. They do pull off some offbeat, catchy lyrics on the playful "Milkman" and the vampiric "Dracula," Indeed the beats are headscratchingly uncategorizable-not hip-hop, not dancehall, not dub.

### METTLE MUSIC MOODSWINGS

### Bar De Lune/UK/CD

In the year since the release of their Toko debut album, Honeycomb Lounge, Mettle Music's Nic Conef and Mark Wadsworth have revised their sound to include a much wider variety of influences and textures. Released on Ashford. England's Bar De Lune. Moodswings builds on the duo's unrestricted, confident house sound with complex jazz percussion, rich female vocals and superbly layered strings. Perhaps most surprising is "Capture," which begins (as "Part 1") with earthy female vocals and sad acoustic guitar melodies only to develop (as "Part 2") into a digital dub jam that would make Mad Professor proud. By taking a few risks and remaining open to outside influences, the Manchester due have produced an album that both transcends boundaries and defies categorization, just the way music should. Luke Magnuson



### REN MON

### DHAL

### Compost/GER/CD

Dual is an impressive debut from Teutonic producer Ben Mono on the superb Compost imprint. His name may sound like a dodgy infection, but once you get past the faint whiff of pretension, Dual is a chilled, sophisticated excursion through nu-jazz, broken beat and electro-infused funk. While all the tracks will elicit enthusiastic nods of approval, Mono is at his best when he simply lets the groove do the talking. His complex polyrhythms and stark melodies express his musical manifesto more eloquently than mere words ever could. Mono ist sehr gut! June Joseph

### MII

### AFRO FINGER AND GEL

### Tigersushi/FRA/CD

Me, I prefer soft moaning. But if you're into some shrieking psycholovin,' meet Mu and hold tight—the lady'll take you on some wild ride. We get wide splatters of all kinds of great beats from Maurice Fulton (a.k.a. Dr. Scratch), like "Jealous Kids"'s atonal electro slashed with tribal drums and Mu's Japanese-accented petulance. It's drum-circle-meets-electro-thunder, ripped through with some Latin influences and ruptured by Mu's piercing yelps. They're cathartic to a point, but must we get so art-house? Where do you draw the line between potentially iconoclastic and just memorably irritating? Afro Finger & Gel is a squirmy hellcat, thankfully totally unafraid of its weirdness. Selena Hsu

### NOISESHAPE

### THE SIGNAL

### Different Drummer/UK/CD

This release shows that German residents Axel Hirn and Flo Feischmann can dub it with the best of them. The Signal contains cuts that'll shake speakers within inches of lives, and others that show the music isn't just about the vibration of the bassbins. "Sunstorm" is a gorgeous slice of blissed out dubbiness, with pulsing breaks that are punctuated by echoey drum cuts and a smothering, melodic bass. "You Take Control" uses a slippery bass, protohouse beats and backwards key touches to create a perfect spring-board for Jackie Dean's awestruck vocals. A collection of timeless music from deep within. Jon Freer

### OMNI TRI

### VOLUME 1993-2003

### Moving Shadow/UK/CD

Where would drum & bass be without Omni Trio? Moving Shadow has kindly decided to compile an assortment of tunes by the legendary producer, who made what many consider to be the first drum & bass record, on a handy retrospective spanning 10 years of his career. The classics are here: "Tripping on Broken Beats," "Thru the Vibe" and "Renegade Snares" are included, as well as newer tunes like "Nu-Birth" and "Byte Size Life." But what makes this album so awe-inspiring is that the older tunes sound just as fresh and modern as the new ones. Christine Hsieh



### PEACHES FATHERFUCKER XL/UK/CD

Peaches is proof that fads may come and go, but electropunk is like fine, funky cheese when this freak is at it. Like the whole genre personified, her bisexuality ("I don't like to make the choice/I like girls and I like boys") is arquably exem-

plified by a horny mash of buxom electronic bass with hard guitar snarls. Able to tap the most visceral of both camps at once, she still achieves this logical composite through minimal techniques. From the opening Joan Jett rip to Iggy Pop's cameo and Peaches's smooth singing, Fatherfucker threatens even wider appeal than Teaches of Peaches. Liz Cordingley

### PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS

### OR STAY TUNED

### Om/US/CD

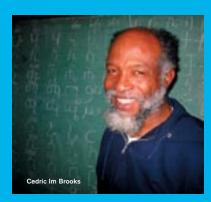
Hear me out on this one: People Under the Stairs is the new Gangstarr. They're not going to replace Gangstarr-no one canbut they've got the veteran duo's same formula down pat, and consistency is their hallmark. This album gives you exactly what you'd expect from PUTS: entirely sample-based production with tons of soul, solid rhymes and a listening experience that won't blow you away, but is nonetheless very pleasing for the hip-hop purist. If you've been digging hip-hop for a long time, it'll be hard for you to not like this album. Pete Babb

### PREFUSE 73

### EXTINGUISHED: OUTTAKES

### Warp/UK/CD

warpuncus
Let's say you have to write a libretto for Terry Gilliam's Brazil
using chunky machine sounds instead of human language. If
you're solid, the result would be something like Prefuse 73's
Extinguished: Outtakes: alien, slightly boggy, sonically addled.
Unlike his wax-slinging brethren, Prefuse is more interested in
creating atmosphere than making pastiche for its own sake-so
you get the tailored soundscapes without the "check out this
sample" bravado. Though the album's one-drop beats get laborious, Prefuse switches it up in the fizzling "Dubs That Don't
Match," and the cinematic "Whisper in My Ear to Tell Me You
Hate Me" Rachel Swan



### CEDRIC IM BROOKS & THE LIGHT OF SABA THE LIGHT OF SABA Honest Jon's/NL/CD

Cedric Im Brooks channels natural vibrations into an elevated organic poem. His pure roots music glows with consciousness. Cries of freedom and blazing rhythms roll on billowing drums. From a shower of bird chirps, Brooks's saxophone uncoils and bursts into supernatural melodies. Brooks is a Jamaican music sage whose fine-tuned education came both at the landmark Alpha Catholic School for Boys and in early Studio One sessions. His evolution soared in 1970 when he formed the Mystic Revelation of Rastafari, alongside master percussionist Count Ossie. Together they created a crystallized sound expression of modern Rastafarianism. Brooks carried this vision onward with his next collective, The Light of Saba. Their music flows with African tones. Afrobeat, calypso, disco and American cosmic jazz shine with a steady undercurrent of Nyabinghi drumming. The Light of Saba is a soul statement. Breath it in. frosty

### RANKING JO ZION HIGH

### Blood and Fire/UK/CD

Jamaican toaster Ranking Joe was only 20 when he recorded 1980's *Round The World* in a single two-hour session. Now reissued under the title *Zion High*, this crucial disc showcases Joe's easy chatting style over Dennis Brown productions like "A Cup of Tea" and "Slave Driver." Bonuses include long unavailable tracks from Brown ("Bubbling Fountain") and Black Uhuru ("Wood For My Fire") backed by a young Sly and Robbie. Still, all this additional star power can't outshine the true ram dance master. Joe's trademark rapid-fire bong-diddleys and easy, pure voice sail over the tracks, and King Tubby and Scientist's versions are every bit as thick as the smoke clouds in the studio. *Ross Hogg* 



# ESCAPE FROM ALCATRAZ Coup d'Etat/US/CD

### CURB SERVIN': THE MIXTAPE SESSIONS Raptivism/US/CD

Two of the Bay Area's hardest working and most consistent acts. Rasco and

Zion I have paid endless dues, escaped from treacherous labels, toured the world and developed international fan bases without compromising their styles. Rasco flexes his aggressive, no-nonsense tone throughout; the song "Get Free" is a triumphant declaration set to a sick bass line and addictive clanping beat, as he takes aim at his former label. Several tracks use Rocafella-style sped up soul loops, which works well, especially on "You Got The Time." Planet Asia, Casual and Chali2na also represent. Zion I are less rugged and more on the spiritual/revolutionary tip, but they come dope as always, with Amp Live's outstanding space-age production setting the mood for Zion's high-pitched flow. Here, they give ample shine to a number of local players, most notably D.U.S.T. and Deuce Eclipse, who rip the mic on several tunes, especially the Neptunes-flavored title track; we also get Madlib's take on their early single "Critical." Overflowing with banging beats and on-point lyricism, these are two albums you need to pick up. Brolin Winning

### OGDAN BACZYNSKI

### RENEGADE PLATINUM MEGA DANCE ATTACK PARTY: DON THE PLATES

### Rephlex/CD/US

For those only familiar with Bogdan Raczynski from the lovely tintinnabulations of last year's My Love I Love, Renegade Platinum may induce whiplash. More akin to his rigorous live performances (it is in fact compiled from Drum and Bass Classixx, the I Will Eat Your Children Too EP, and other bits and bobs), Renegade Platinum is a scattershot tin can of d&b rhythms, noise, and general sonic paranoia that shares stylistic affinities with Luke Vibert's Plug, Squarepusher, best mate Richard James and the recent mayhem that comes courtesy of Broklyn Beats. Insane. And quite delightful to boot. Alexis Georgopoulos

### ROUGH AMERICANA

### Circle of Light/US/CD

Rough Americana is a live-sampled burlap weave of coarse, scratchy strands of sound as disparate as soapbox Jello Biafra, ghostly Missy Elliott and sinewy Egyptian beats from the looms of two Brooklynites, DJ Mutamassik and Morgan Craft. It's got the irregular patternless texture that marks the handmade, every improvised moment of high abstraction as utterly different as the one before. "Amid Debris" is the rare track with a filtered, staticky beat topped with guitar noodlings and thin, plucky samples; otherwise, Rough Americana eludes most melody and rhythm. Check the two "Memphis" tracks—"USA" and "Africa"—that wriggle just beyond grasp. Selena Hsu

### SKEME/BIG P/EXTREMISTS

### THE INTRODUCTION

### Titan Sounds/UK/CD

The fact that UK hip-hop still struggles to find a Stateside audience clearly hasn't deterred Skitz, arguably England's illest producer. Alongside partner Mickle, Skitz has launched the Titan Sounds imprint, and *The Introduction* is all that it promises to be. Featuring label mainstays Skeme, Big P and the Extremists, alongside cameos from Brit-hop heavies Rodney P, Fallacy and Est'elle, this proper yardcore bashment has most US underground shit beat hands down. *James Friedman* 

### SI OWRIDER

### HISTORIAS EN REVISION

### Nomadic Soundsystem/US/CD

The latest in a line of socially and politically active East Los Angeles groups stretching back through War and El Chicano, Slowrider respect the sound of their forebearers while updating it with bilingual MCs and space-funk atmosphere (think Lonnie Liston-Smith in Havana). Down to six pieces from the nine-piece combo that released Nacimiento and toured with Ozomatli, their third album is a mixture of new tracks and remixes. The sound is tightly rhythmic, with horn flourishes countered by darkly introspective tracks like "Misconceptions" and "Acid Reign" adding their production skills to a stark and effective balance between string-laden dirge, beatbox and tongue-twisting rap. Joe Rice



TAKE
THIRD STORY
Buttermilk/US/CD
GEL
DOLCE

Plop/JPN/CD
LA-based producer Take puts junk in the

trunk of the hip-hop lowrider with *Third*Story. Crisp claps mark the syncopation
of hi-hat throttling as rehashed birdsongs stutter between violent

drums. Chunky beats resound with a strapping tenacity, awakening the soul roots of modern hip-hop. With Third Story, Take melds analog and digital parts into an unlikely whole, while Anticon man Gel's Dolce works within an electronic mainframe of sound environment that charts the course for riptides awash in piano strains, laptop-hewn fuzziness, gentle guitar plucks, and an undertow of deft string arrangements. Sound fragments cut edgewise across an otherwise stark soundscape as they cleave to their classical upbringing, Sara Jayne Crow



# TIED & TICKLED TRIO OBSERVING SYSTEMS GUTHER I KNOW YOU KNOW

Morr Music/GFR/CD

### Morr wisely gives artists the freedom to fully explore, and these two releases showcase how amply rewarding such

artistic freedom can be. Guther's debut

is full of "girl's music," according to Julia Guther, and although the band's split 50/50 in terms of gender, their approach is indeed spiritually feminine. Their pleasingly fey pop shimmers with coy intimacy minus the river-dragging cynicism that defines, say, women's music. T&TT bump up their nascent lineup of drums, bass and electronics with an eminently buoyant bevy of flutists, pianists and horn players. Tossing aside formal unity, "Freakmachine" slides into big band mode, while Observing Systems (a central tenet of the band's creative process) deftly weaves electronic and organic into a heady blend. Margaret Murray



### T-LOVE LONG WAY BACK Pickaninny/US/CD

B-Girl supreme T-Love pulls a Josephine Baker/Nina Simone power move on her long-awaited solo effort. Fed up with Stateside industry politics (check her segment in Rachel Raimist's documentary Nobody Knows My Name), she's

crossed the ocean and created a long-player that's as much pimpstress slap at the music industry status quo as inspired slice of post-hip-hop flavor. The "new" T-Love makes a grand entrance on "Swing Malindy," a song too jazzy to be called neo-soul, free-associating words, rhythms and melodies into an intoxicating mix of singing, poetry and vernacular in two languages. "Comme Dilated, je travais tous les angles," she explains. Collabos with Jay Dee, Chali 2na, Miles Tackett and The Herbaliser bound across surprisingly fertile musical and lyrical terrain, as the fabulous Ms. Love makes every other female rapper but Medusa seem mo' tired than Carol Channing. Eric K. Arnold

### THE HOUSE OF FI

### 21ST CENTURY FIX Tresor/GER/CD

### Tresor/GER/C

Since dropping the anomalous techno gem Neon Rocka as Subhead in 2000, British producer Jason Leach has become obsessed with "ruckno," a ramshackle mash-up of rap, rock, electro, and techno. This overlong double disc features 37 tracks by Circa, Royal Blood and Carrion Crow, groups whose common link is Leach. Circa come off as a parody of machismo-poisoned rap, Prince, Gary Glitter and grunge rock. If Cockneys had frat parties, Circa would be the house band. Royal Blood and Carrion Crow fare better, forging unclichéd electro and techno that's weirdly torqued, visceral, and distorted. Leach has talent, but he needs to focus on his strengths. Dave Segal



### BARBARA MORGENSTERN NICHTS MUSS Monika/Labels/GER/CD

Born of a war-splintered generation and technologically-informed culture, German lap-pop singer/songwriter Barbara Morgenstern has cultivated a following by refining piano-composed, computer-configured melancholic minimalism that reconnects folkish intimacy with digital detachment. With production assistance from Stefan "Pole" Betke and Palais Schaumburg founder/Orb collaborator Thomas "Readymade/Visions of Blah" Fehlmann, Morgenstern tethers hushed, huddled tones to the Teutonic tap of crisp clicks. For her third

Morgenstern tethers hushed, huddled tones to the Teutonic tap of crisp clicks. For her third album, *Nichts Muss*, however, Morgenstern has married a less sequestering production to the sway of her flickering soft-focus syncopation. Plenty of room remains to drape subtleties

among the drones and drifts. Gentle guitar figures pirouette against Morgenstern's vocals, which carry a message that's secondary to melody. On close listen, beneath sometimes stark crackle, percolating repetitions and rounded analogues harmonics glide and swoop, finally dovetailing with the kinetic precision of fine watchmaking. Morgenstern is of an era of Germans that are harnessing technology to both emit and emote, escape and express. *Tony Ware* 

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### MUSIC, MAGIC, MYTH

### Raptivism/US/CD

Long overdue, but very much aware of the moment, the Last Emperor is indeed the last of a dving breed. Continuing in the vein of the underground epic "Secret Wars," where hip-hop stars battled comicbook supervillains, Music, Magic, Myth harks back to the mid-'90s lyric-focused style and street-conscious content. He's all about snapping the lyrics percussively, often with multi-syllabic rhymes, and has an equal penchant for keen social commentary and mythic comic-book narratives. Backed by the Beatminerz, Prince Paul and Ayatollah, this is durable, classic hip-hop. Jon Weldon

### SHRINK

### Triage/US/CD

If you never wondered where the exquisitely elaborated post-rock melancholy on the Notwist's last album Neon Golden came from, you maybe shouldn't look too seriously into this bunch of rereleases. On the other hand, you will certainly find some remarkable milestones of an era where guitar, teenage angst and two posts-hardcore and rock-briefly collided. In between the dark Bavarian woods and the high-rising Alps, this poignant state of being was cultivated and shaped into some unforgettable fourminute gems. It's quite a lesson to observe the slight transformations from their self-titled debut (an anger/sadness-driven proto-Dinosaur Jr. blast) to Nook (same, but more articulate and with a subtle speed-metal edge) and finally 12 and Shrink, the latter of which already had all the ingredients which made Neon Golden such a masterpiece. Andreas Busch



### IN THROUGH THE OUT DOOR Tigerbeat6/US/CD PET SOUNDS Vertical Form/UK/CD

California native Matt Haines slices through beats and electro rhythms with a deft hand, sonically hailing more from Berlin than his native Los Angeles. With

previous work on Mille Plateaux, Bottrop-Boy, Massive Advance and his own Inflatabl label, it's not surprising that the prolific Haines chose to release two albums simultaneously under his Rip-Off Artist moniker. With its off-kilter electro rhythm work, Haines's Tigerbeat6 album is notably similar to Si Begg's earlier work, with a nice Mille Plateaux-esque glitchy finish. Vertical Form's collection is more relaxed, offering casual pop vocals alongside funky, skittering beats. Check Pet Sounds' "Bear Down," which splices together noise and samples so nimbly that it's hard to tell whether you're listening to vocals or beats. You've gotta respect any artist who announces, through quivering effects: "I am a vibrating vegetable." Janet Tzou

### TOPICS IN PRACTICAL SCIENCE

### Full Cycle/UK/CD

It's a tad bizarre that downtempo act Third Face-known to friends and close family as Mike Young from Hull-is putting out an LP through one of the UK's most established jungle imprints. But once you hear it you'll know why. Not even the eminent Roni Size could resist the gently rippling electronics that stretch out languorously towards infinity and which occasionally come wrapped in heartwarming vocals. Slow, sensual stuff that's nicely old fashioned in places, this is a great diversion from the Full Cycle massive. Paul



### MAPS FROM THE WILDERNESS Tru Thoughts/UK/CD

TM Juke debuts a wistful album of Sunday afternoon lullabies for quality downtempo imprint Tru Thoughts-heavy on the sampled atmospherics yet with enough live edge to keep the music from becoming Muzak, Maps is split down the

middle between instrumental tracks (like the sweet, jazzy "Remember 99" or the lazy, reverb-drenched "Just For A Day") and vocal jams featuring Del-esque MC Bread & Water and Alice Russell-whose sassy and commanding delivery made the Quantic Soul Orchestra album sizzle-here scat-singing through "Playground Games." Message to Tru Thoughts: keep it coming! Mike Battaglia

Turbulence has drawn many comparisons to Anthony B and Sizzla, but his emergence as a singer with his own style has been gradual. His recorded work has, until now, lagged behind his rep as a stunning live performer and vocalist of enormous potential. Turbulence retains the raw DJ stylings that first brought him attention, but his fragile, undulating singing (backed by Sly and Robbie and the plucky guitar of Chinna Smith) finally sounds at home. The Truth's snappy drum beats, conscious lyrics and occasionally funny turns of phrase are a nice contrast to the more bombastic fare now dom-

inating the dancehall charts. Matt Fisher

### THE BIG BLOWJAY (OMP)

### PUNK ... NOT DIFT 2.nd rec/GER/CD

It's the moody '90s all over again and 2.nd rec offers up two different modern, computer-enhanced, re-envisionings of music from the decade past. On The Big Blowjay (OMP), Twig Infection hauls out a craftily honed arsenal of indie-pop-punk-post-rock songs, of interest if only for the bizarrely intriguing image they manage to conjure of a Pearl Jam meets Sigur Rós supergroup. Punk... Not Diet spends a good portion of its time gazing at it shoes, with suitably delicate vocals and persistently pleasant instrumentation, but Di Miro's music was elevated to such brilliance on the recent remix project, The Academic Rise of Falling Drifters that the '90s don't look nearly good as the '00s. Brion Paul

### ANSWERS

### Southern/US/CD

If Ui narrowly missed out on the kind of attention that merited Tortoise during the golden age of post-rock, it doesn't seem to have bothered Sasha Frere-Jones and company. Answers doesn't chase any current In-Sound in search of the industry push. Rather, it continues the group's fixation on rhythm and sound, bringing a bit of rock back to a subgenre that has all but done away with it in favor of a cleaner-lined digitalia. Answers shares more with T-Rex, Fugazi circa *Instrument*, and Tortoise's debut than it does with To Rococo Rot or Rothko. Alexis Georgopoulos

### WEATHER REPORT

### Touch/UK/CD

Chris Watson's Weather Report comprises three 18-minute tracks assembled from recordings of natural phenomena in Kenya, Scotland and Iceland. In a change of tack from his previous releases (Outside The Circle Of Fire and Stepping Into The Dark), the former member of Cabaret Voltaire has blended and edited his recorded material into location-specific collages. Unlike Matmos, Nymphomatriarch, Sonic Catering Band et al, Watson makes no

attempt to displace his found sounds from their original context, but the shrewd and subtle way he deploys his forceful authorial hand is an effective conceit that yields absorbing and vivid results. David Hemingway

### WIE ES SEIN WOLLTE Source/GER/CD

Not necessarily material for the four-on-the-floor set, minimal techno is usually tricked out with burbling blurps, teensy percussive bits, crinkly keyboard quirks and lush, dubby beats. Such is the case for German producer Benjamin Wild's latest full-length, Wie Es Sein Wolte. Wild keeps things fairly warm and peppy throughout most of the album's 12 tracks, accented by smooth funk and dub. Yet there's something lacking here, at least from an album perspective. While there are several tight tracks (such as "Rave Spleen," the feathery "Flora De La Noche" or the raw funkiness of "112BPM Rocker"), Wie doesn't sustain its infectious element throughout the entire album. Tim Pratt

### ABSORBER Dekathalon/GER/CD

Germany's Zombie Nation could stake a claim as the antithesis of the high-fashion, heatrical element of Fischerspooner with its faux horror-stage sets featuring outlandish makeup, fake blood, dramatic ocals and severed legs. The man behind

Zombie Nation is Splank (a.k.a. Florian Senfter), a Munich-based producer who literally came out of nowhere thanks to the huge European success of his debut track, "Kerncraft 400." Now, nearly three years later, Splank has emerged with a very impressive album, Absorber, on his new imprint Dekathalon. It's a modern electro album with style-albeit a very dark style-with intricate, tightly wound, almost mechanical arrangements incorporating bits of glitch, electro and techno. Fans of the Kompakt label or artists such as Chicken Lips will be especially pleased. Tim Pratt

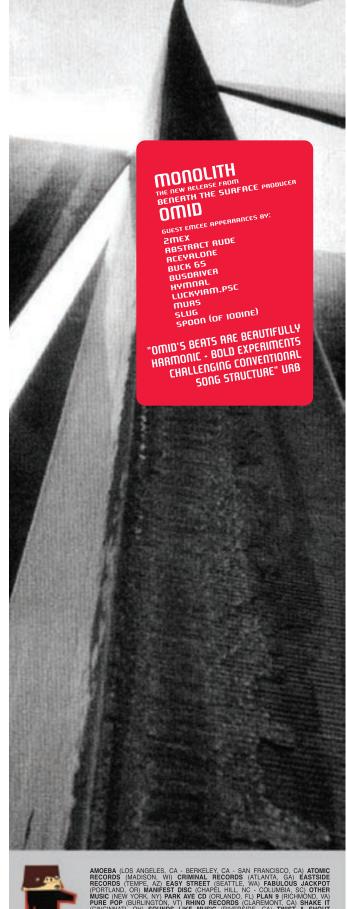


### BAZOOKA TOOTH Definitive Jux/US/CD

"Oh my god, journalists across the globe are officially critiquing my first eight bars!" Aesop may call out the critics in the first verse of his third album, Bazooka Tooth, but he needn't worry as he delivers a stunning follow-up to Labor Days Fans of his Long Island drawl will celebrate this return to form and addicts of his amazing vocabulary will get to dust off their dictionaries as Aesop contorts words and phrases into a symphony of lyrical anarchy. Aesop made most of his own beats on this record, creating dark and dense soundscapes from the not-so-distant future, perfect for popping in the Walkman as you roam a deserted New York City as the sole survivor of a nuclear holocaust. His drums compliment his words perfectly. Aesop's label boss and frequent collaborator El-P offers production and verbally hijacks the exquisite

"We're Famous," singling out fake indie rappers: "They been failing for years and calling themselves vets/that's bold/motherfucker you're not a vet, you're just old," and Mr. Lif joins him for back and forth storytelling on "11:35." Bazooka Tooth reveals another side of Aesop: darker and denser. Gone are the sweet melodies and sing-a-long choruses of 2001's "Daylight"-enter the ominous refrain of "Superfluke": "Please don't feed the Bazooka Tooth!" Dirty hardcore hip-hop at its finest, done the Def Jux way. DJ Anna







AMOEBA (LOS ANGELES, CA - BERKELEY, CA - SAN FRANCISCO, CA) ATOMIC RECORDS (MADISON, WI) CRIMINAL RECORDS (ATLANTA, GA) EASTSIDE RECORDS (EMPE, AZ) EASY STREET (SEATTLE, WA) FABULOUS JACKPOT (PORTLAND, OR) MANIFEST DISC (CHAPEL HILL, NC - COLUMBIA, SC) OTHER MUSIC (NEW YORK, NY) PARK AYE CO (ORLANDO, FL) PLAN 9 (RICHMOND, VA) PURE POP (BURLINSTON, VT) PARK AYE CO (ORLANDO, FL) PLAN 9 (RICHMOND, VA) PURE POP (BURLINSTON, VT) PARK AYE CO (ORLANDO, TO, PLAN 9 (RICHMONT, CA) SHAKE IT (CINCINNAT, OH) SOUNDS LIKE MUSIC (RIVERSIDE CA) TWIST & SHOULD (CINCINNAT, OH) SOUNDS LIKE MUSIC (RIVERSIDE CA) TWIST & SHOULD (STANDON FREED CA) WAS A SHOULD CONTROL OF THE COLUMNATION OF THE



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### MUTANT DISCO Ze/FRA/CD NY NO WAVE Ze/FRA/CD DFA COMPILATON #1 DFA/US/CD

Here's the thing about New York at the turn of the '80s: it chafed. Hipsters weren't yet hip; dissent hadn't yet been commodified. While punk was wreaking havoc on the Bowery, hip-hop was leaving a footprint uptown and disco was lathering up the nightclubs, a whole set of dissidents were finding that they only felt at home in the margins, in the narrow cracks left between subcultures. Then, all of a sudden, they had a rallying cry. "Contort Yourself," by the sax attacker James Chance, was a delightful mess of a song-sinister bass line, raggedy cowbell, horn riffs as random and shocking as lightning, Chance jokingly asking, "Why don't you try being stupid, instead of smart?"

Tellingly, "Contort Yourself" appears on two new comps from the seminal Ze label-home to early work by Chance, Suicide, Lydia Lunch and Material among others—at two different lengths. On NY No Wave, it's a three-minute burst, just one irregular blip in an excellent collection of irregular blips. On Suicide's "Mister Ray," drums hit at what always seem to be the wrong moment. On "The Closet," a breathless Lydia Lunch declares, "I'm in the closet and I can't breathe," while Chance's alto squeals in the background, the sound of a new New York warbling. (Like any label comps, this pair has its limitations, overlooking crucial acts like DNA, Defunkt and Konk in favor of in-house lesser-knowns like Rosa Yemen and Garcons, though DNA's Arto Lindsay is represented on two quizzically beautiful tracks credited to Arto/Neto).

On the double-disc Mutant Disco, "Contort" bleeds beyond six minutes, play-

ing up its bassline and its inherent abandon. Just as the no wavers found hidden pockets in rock, the artists collected here–Was (Not Was), Material, Aural Exciters, Cristina–showed that slavish devotion to the 4/4 tempo wasn't the only way to make dance music. Aural Exciters' "Emile" worked skitter beats and kid chants way before Timbaland got to them. "Bustin' Out," Material's transcendent collaboration with Nona Hendryx, concluded its groove excursion with feedbacky guitar. New York's Caribbean and Latin legacies got humorous spin here too, on Coati Mundi's crucial "Que Pasa/Me No Pop I" and Don Armando's 2nd Ave. Rhumba Band's "Deputy of Love." Dance music, these artists acknowledged, contained elements of the absurd.

Unlike that of their forebears, the music of New York's DFA Records-as close a modern-day counterpart to Ze as we've got-is almost impossibly precise. Home to two of last year's indelible singles-the Rapture's disco-punk entanglement "House of Jealous Lovers" and LCD Soundsystem's winking nostalgia trip "Losing My Edge"-DFA has made a cottage industry of the post-punk revival: amateurism is no longer just for amateurs anymore. The eight songs on their first collection show impressive range-noise mavens Black Dice don't seem lost amidst electro-inspired excursions like "By The Time I Get To Venus," by The Juan Maclean. "Losing My Edge," though, encapsulates the new movement best. The solo screed of DFA producer James Murphy, it's a self-aware slice of music, an in-joke about trendiness, insecurity and perseverance that can only come from someone who looks backwards. But there's the rub: two decades ago, history was something you avoided, not plundered. The edge was there to lose. *Jon Caramanica* 



### MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO STORM THE STUDIO R.M.X.S. Tino Corp/US/CD

Raw. Fat. Menacing. Funky. Put all these adjectives in front of "beats" to describe Jack Dangers's first Meat Beat Manifesto LP. 1989's Storm the Studio. They also describe this remix compilation, starting off with a versus between Dangers and longtime Tino Corp pal Ben Stokes called "Cease to Exist." The monster hip-hop break that popurun through a spatial expander; the thing's as wide as a Mac truck, roaring with digitized vocals and little else. Oh yeah, the rest: Eight Frozen Modules pistol-whips "God O.D." with a fully-loaded laptop, while Twilight Circus Sound System, Jonah Sharp, DJ Swamp and The Opus also make fine contributions. One non-sequitur selection. microsound experimentalist Frank on "Reanimix." Not to be missed.

### Logistic/FRA/CD

While we all know that techno has never enjoyed the same kind of success in the US as it does in the rest of the world, it's a good thing there are enough labels out there willing to support the genre. France's Logistic Records, which has released a slew of minimal techno tracks in the last seven years, is celebrating its anniversary with the release of Always Trying, compiling and remastering what it considers to be its greatest tracks. Featuring several Detroit artists, including Octave One (with his relentlessly funky "Working Night" mix), Robert Hood, Claude Young and Aril Brikha, as well as ussive-heavy tracks by Technasia, John Thomas and Fumiya Tanaka (but no Dan Bell?), Logistic is certainly puttin' in work. Let's hope they keep on trying. Tim Pratt

### BONGO EXPRESS VOL. 2

### Funky Juice/IT/CD

And you thought Thievery Corporation was the best music for looking at commercials. Up until the release of Bongo Express Vol. 2, that is. Despite quality producers (Nuspirit Helsinki) and remixers (Atiazz), many of the tracks simply sound...well, flat, A compilation replete with the dastardly retro-futuristic furniture liner notes of so many "mood music" comps of late, Bongo Express features all the samba-swapping samples necessary for those Chanel-clad poolside martini parties. Lounge, anyone? Sara Jayne Crow



### African Done/SA/CD

Hip-hop, ragga and dub function as a global id, harnessing social issues to South African rhythmic techniques on this collection from the African Dope label. The beats on the 19-track monste have a lo-fi rawness, ranging from the fidgety analog bass of Constructus's "It

Don't Mean a Thing..." and the off-kilter synth tweaks of Neon Don's "Life is Neon," to Moodphase5ive's funk breaks and the dubby echoes of Joshu's "Movement." The rappers lack the easy flow of their American counterparts, but the subject matter is familiar, albeit with a broader worldview. Occasionally haunting cuts, like the prescient, pre-9/11 "Sad Girl in Japan" (in which the word "Afghanistan" echoes over and over), speak to the vision and potential of the SA scene. Matt Fisher

### **CIRCULATION: COLORS 2**

### Circulation/UK/CD

In the three years that separate the first edition of Colors from this sequel, tech-house dons Circulation seem to have honed their sound into an even more breathy and streamlined affair. Merging their stripped-down, quietly muscular techno with a meandering, druggy ambience, the duo of Paul Davis and Matt Jackson have created a document that veers between '80s nostalgia, Jarre-esque journeys and edgy escapism. At times, intricate Detroit techno is taken to quietly sublime levels via a forceful primordial pump, but there's plenty of standard (i.e. mediocre) dancefloor stuff here. With each track representing a different color, this is definitely one for the synaesthetics. Paul Sullivan

### **CRASH REDEVELOPMENT** Co ad Audio/US/CD

Co.ad.audio is a new label cooked up by Brooklyn's own Datach'i and Unit plus cohorts. Crash Redevelopment represents the ultramodern sound of the borough's underground electronic contingent:

dizzvingly artificial sound templates, wire-quided beats that twist around curves and fold themselves over with ease, and catchy melodies struggling for daylight in and among the noise. Unit melds expansive pads with percussive rattles for a contemplative-yet-mischevious feel: wingman Datach'i comes with drum patterns that would make Squarepusher's head snap. Newcomer Velapene Screen closes out the comp in fine style with the midtempo ditty "Plastic Hamburger Hat." Rob Geary



### Poker Flat/GER/CD

n his quest for a funkier version of mininal tech-house. Poker Flat founder and globally respected DJ/producer Steve lug has assembled two CD mixes, one med at the dancefloor and the other at he lounge. Bug's uptempo CD falls surprisingly flat: despite selecting work from

globally respected talent (Freaks, Château Flight, John Tejada and DJ Sneak), Bug's presentation (using digital mixing program Final Scratch) is somewhat monotonous-it's hard to get a sense of his mixing skills. In fact, Gillieron & McArthur's "Now It's Dark" and Bug's "That Kid" provide two of the livelier moments on this otherwise ho-hum display. The downtempo CD is better, with Eerik's "Shimmer" and Antonelli Electr's "Waiting For You" offering the loveliest interludes. Janet Tzou



### ROP THE DEBT (ANNULONS LA DETTE) World Village/GER/CD

Imagine living in an impoverished environment, having little access to basic numan needs. Obviously, despotic governments, bad policies and civil war are to blame; so, too, are the actions of the West and the loans they give to countries that can barely afford to make even

the interest payments. According to the UN, each fiscal year, the world's poorest countries spend a significant amount of their annual budgets on debt repayment, money desperately needed for education and health care. Drop the Debt aims to increase awareness of this great injustice, and implores the West to cancel the debt. With global music powerhouses such as Cape Verde's Cesaria Evora, Brazil's Chico Cesar, Zimbabwe's Oliver Mtukudzi, Cameroon's Sally Nyolo and Venezuela's Soledad Bravo giving voice to debt relief, the cause has an even better chance of being heard. June Joseph

### **ELECTRICITY 2: AN ELECTRONIC POP SAMPLER**

### Ninthwave/US/CD

Much of the synth and electro-pop being churned out these days is more déià vu than a Wharhol exhibit in an old Campbell's warehouse. We've seen and heard all this before. Modern-day covers of '80s hits aside, there exists a fine line between originality and blatant rip-offs of 20-year-old synth-pop gems. Electricity 2 straddles that line, mixing moments of unique, blip-happy electro pop with grating synth muck, Highlights include Spray's "Don't You Know Who I Am?", a sweeping, time-changing electro whirlwind, while Turd Ferguson's smirking spoof of Miss Kittin on "Alan Cumming-Nightcrawler Mix" leaves you smiling. And don't forget about Heaven 17's new song, as well as fine works by Astromill. NukleoN and Soviet. Now where'd I stash my "Frankie Says Relax" t-shirt? Tim Pratt



JK club Fabric's mix series offers a sleek, tech-tickled disco romp from uave production duo Swayzak. Akufen's signature "Skidoos" is like a slo-mo shot of glittering mirror ball confetti tossed from the hands of a go-go dancer high above the dancing crowd. It

mixes into Luomo's ultra-sultry "Present Lover," a total conceptual go, although slightly awkward melodies halt its momentum. "Hoping" features middle-aged Kitty-Yo crooner Louie Austen's earnest vocals topping some inventive-as-fuck. Herbert-tweaked beats. And "Hell yes!" to the warm jazzy dub fuzz of the Rockers Hi-Fi track. Swayzak keeps their sweet collection of tracks nicely restrained without being icy for the first half, before moving into harder. Lucite-heeled stormers by the likes of DFA's LCD Soundsystem and Metro Area, Selena Hsu

### TREAT ME LIKE YOU DO Beatservice/NOR/CD

Offering up two and sometimes three versions of selected tracks from their For Sleepyheads Only album, Norwegians Jo Bakke and Anja Oyen Uister clearly show off their musical capabilities, proving that remixology can indeed be a science. Keyboard melodies blend with omnipresent guitar riffs, then charge hand-in-hand towards heavy electronic tweaks and blips. Leading the rest of the tracks in this style is a remix of New Order's "Blue Monday," with Björk-style vocals sung over a rock guitar riff and a funky drum loop that takes this classic to new levels. Jenn Marston

### FROM OUR MINDS TO YOUR EARS

### FOM/US/CD

For their debut album, the Sunnyvale, CA trio of Audiosond, El Gato #9 and Morpheus (a.k.a. Brian Ward, Christopher Leath and Paul Leath) clearly have some audio hardware they're unafraid to use. Nor are they bashful about who gets to play with which instruments. Be it the downtempo synths generated by Ward in "To the Future," the sitars and woodwinds in many of Christopher's tracks, or Paul's 4/4 tribal drums on songs like "Sunshines Today," the compilation is impressively diverse, and despite being new artists from the unglamorous suburbs of Silicon Valley, the EOM crew displays compositional skills on par with any metropolitan scene.

### FUTURE FUNK SOUAD: NEW: RPM 2

### En:vison/UK/CD

Volume two of the NEW:BPM series offers a solid anthology of nuskool breaks from En:vision artists. Seamlessly mixed by Future Funk Squad's Glen Nicholls, this double-CD features many of his own tracks and remixes, with a good chunk of exclusive tracks to tease DJs that will never get their hands on them. The first CD has a bouncier feel, while the second delves into much edgier territory, dominated by dirty basslines and subtler effects. Overall, the mix is like moving from sipping a martini in a swanky nightclub to gripping a water bottle in your sweaty hand on the packed dancefloor over the course of a couple of hours. Dmatrix

### Yoshitoshi/US/2xCD

The worst thing about this two-disc set is listening to it when all the clubs are closed-this is music meant to shake your ass. Mixed by Luke Fair, the first CD is built for endurance, the boms at the perfect speed to keep a dancer going all night. The second disc, mixed by Desyn Masiello, is speedier still, with its programming focused on slightly more driving house in contrast to the first CDs intense, but laid-back sound. Both are low on vocals. high on quality. Where's my crowbar? It's time to break into a warehouse, Luciana Lopez

### **HOT SHIT: SONIC MOOK EXPERIMENT 3**

### Blast First/UK/CD

The previous Sonic Mook Experiment comps bore the subtitle "Future Rock & Roll." The "hot shit" on volume three ain't futuristic at all. Most of the bands here pay homage to Brit post-punks the Fall and Gang Of Four, NY art funk minimalists ESG, and the obscure mid-'80s roster of Ron Johnson Records (think angular, spasmodic noise-rock by guys who can't get laid). Only old fuckers who read NME in the '80s would know the source of this bassheavy aggro-rock; to anyone else, it'll sound as fresh as tomorrow. Featuring Yeah Yeahs, !!!, Radio 4, and lots of brilliant groups you've never heard of. Dave Segal



### Y THE VIRE: DAVID MORALES

### Kina Street/US/2xCD

No surprises here: just two and a half ours of pure, classy NY/NJ house culled from producers like DJ Pierre and Blaze, featuring plenty of vocals from Kenny Bobien, Jocelyn Brown, and more. Long, seamless mixes focus the atter tion on the songs, letting Morales's pro-

gramming skills shine, particularly when he gets more Afrocentric on the second disc with cuts from Mateo & Matos and Kerri Chandler. On a mix celebrating 10 years of King Street, I would have enjoyed some earlier songs like 95 North's "Hold On," but it's hard to complain about what's here. Peter Nicholson

### PHILIY SOUL

### Unisex/UK/CD

Philadelphia has been a Mecca for soul musicians ever since the likes of Gamble and Huff created timeless music there by The O-Jays, Harold Melvin and Teddy Pendergrass in the early and mid-'70s. This compilation focuses on some of the contemporary soulsters carrying the torch, artists such as King Britt, Jazzy Jeff, Jill Scott, Black Thought, Floetry, Jazzyfatnastees, Bilal, The Philadelphia Experiment, Vikter Duplaix, Ursula Rucker, etc. Though not yet quite as timeless as the Philly soul of the past, these artists have built a foundation for a proud new era. Paul Sullivan



Pork Recordings has accomplished a rare feat. After 15 years in the biz, the label remains unerringly leftfield, undeniably charming and endlessly entertaining. Pork Chops gathers the prime cuts from the label into a convenient two-disc set that includes regular Porksters like

Fila Brazillia, Leggobeast, Baby Mammoth and Bullitnuts. The end result is a wild ride through shimmering downbeat, wildly funky house and tasty, breaks-tinged jazz workouts. While the tunes cover a broad range of the dance music section, they're all lipsmackingly good and pretty darn fun to listen to. Christine Hsieh

### REGGAE GOLD 2003

### VP-Atlantic/US/CD

Killer sequencing turns what could have been just a collection of current dancehall singles into a cohesive document. Take the 1-2 punch of "Hey Sexy Lady," with Shaggy and Brian & Tony Gold, and "Get Busy," Sean Paul's inescapable crossover hit, which segue together smoother than rum and coconut. Likewise, Tanya Stephens's "It's A Pity" and Morgan Heritage's "She's Still Loving Me" provide ironic contrast, relating the point of view of both the "other woman" and the guilt-ridden married man. Other notable observations: Bobby Digital and Tony Kelly are absolutely robotic when it comes to pumping out wicked riddims; even remixes with aging hip-hop superstars Busta Rhymes and LL Cool L can't derail Sean-a-P and Wayne Wonder's star trains. Good news for all raggamuffins. Eric K. Arnold

### Smuaa/UK/CD

Truth in advertising-what a quaint ideal. Tired of a world inundated with hyped exaggeration and obvious factual manipulation to suit dubious ends? Seek shelter in this rock-solid compilation of classic reggae roots tracks, each followed by their dub version. Bim Sherman's "Happiness" and its dub by Yabby You are heavy, as are contributions from Horace Andy, Black Roots, Sugar Minott, Sly & Robbie and Roots Radics. Sample this classic reggae and chill dub set, a simple musical Band-aid for these shattered, complex times. Rob Riddle

### RICHARD X PRESENTS X-FACTOR VOLUME 1

### Virgin Records/UK/CD

Richard X has joked that he was going to name his debut It's Just Two Records Stuck Together, As Girls on Top, he has previously spliced tracks by TLC/The Human League and Adina Howard/Gary Numan to produce the most covetable of "bootleg" twelves. X Factor appropriates, samples, parodies or covers tracks by Mazzy Star. Chaka Khan, The SOS Band and The Human League, but X's witticism would do the collection a disservice. His best recordings transcend merely fusing acappellas and instrumentals to highlight the common aesthetics between '80s soul, electro-pop and the futuristic R&B constructed by Rodney Jerkins et al. X makes the odd misstep, but his collaborations with Liberty X, Javine, Kelis, Tiga and the Sugababes are a joy. David Hemingway

### **RU ELECTRONIC TWO**

### Lo/HK/CD

RU Electronic Two collects downtempo electronica from the former USSR, including music licensed from the Force Tracks, k20, Cheburec and Freizeitglauben labels. Despite being curated on the basis of geography, RU Electronic 2 offers no hints as to a distinct "Russian" aesthetic differentiating this compilation's electronica from that of any other location. Unlike (say) the Nortec Collective's explicitly "Mexican" take on electronic music, there's little to flag tracks by the likes of Alexandroid, Klutch, EU and SCSI-9 as being specifically located within a particular culture. Rather, RU Electronic Two is simply a pretty and pleasant (rather than particularly radical) selection of sedentary electronica that is without obvious geographic anchor. David Hemingway



### Tru Thoughts/UK/CD

This collection of wide-ranging master pieces from Tru Thoughts once again illustrates their flair for signing unfamiliar musical talent. Alongside cuts from wellestablished talent in the world of lazy grooves and restless heats, this compila tion showcases future stars. Kuzu's

'Restless" uses soft footstep-type percussion and questioning strings to create an air of indecision, which doesn't aid vocalist Rachel Potter as she struggles to understand her feelings. Dubble D contributes "Slo," a contemplative cut with introspective strings. brooding brass and distressed vocals. Shapes conforms to Tru Thoughts's ideal of releasing music defined by its quality, not by its tempo or style. Jon Freer

### Codek/US/CD

### ew York's underground zine Repellent

s an active purveyor of exploratory artistic expression, so it makes sense that the 16-track compilation Sonic Rec Room contains such a wide variety of largely experimental electronic music. Ranging from the fractal-laden warmth of Blurter's

"Parkonenlatz" and the 8-bit Gamebov shenanigans of Nullsleep, to the nursery-rhyme-gone-wrong "Run Through the Wind" by XAR (a.k.a. Michael Portney, the "Soy Bomb" guy who crashed Bob Dylan's Grammy performance a few years ago), there's truly something for everyone. Some of the tracks come off a little flat. but really, can you bear to miss out on Donna Summer (no, not the disco diva) mashing up loops of several highly recognizable guitar riff samples amidst glitchy breaks chaos? No, you can't. Tim Pratt

### SYSTEMWIDE REMIXES

The heavy dub textures of Portland's Systemwide have been crying out for remix work ever since the band first stepped into the studio in 1997. It's clear they have some talented admirers, as their sometimes impenetrable, bass heavy rhythms and distortions are picked apart, shuffled and re-imagined by some of the scene's best dubinclined producers to great effect, NY's Cosmic Rocker turns in a funky steppers-style dub. Worship's Rob Payne combines the bassy textures with a jumpy house hi-hat, and Star Dub's sub-bassdriven cut is like bottoming out in an overloaded submarine. Also choice madness from Twilight Circus, Jah Warrior, and Om Records' I-Boogie Get comfortable dim the lights and smoke the whole thing. Matt Fisher

### Gomma/GFR/CD

Compiling the best music even your snottiest friends have never heard of, DJ/musicians Munk (Mathias Modica and Jonas Imbery) assemble another hot round of danceable obscurities from Deutschland's late '70s/early '80s underground. More varied and whimsical than British post-punk of the same period, this German jam scene-an experimental fringe of the Neue Deutsche Welle that bred the pop hit "99 Luftballons"-resulted in some funky, punky, quirky, jerky, electro-erotica that will rock your retro socks off. It's a testament to their importance that, even today, the selections on this comp sound super-fresh and totally familiar at the same time. Liz Cordingley

### THE DISCO-TECH OF DJ COSMO

### Yellow/France/CD

If one website is to be believed, there are currently 27,000 "known" DJs in the world. While many merely follow fashion, the most memorable are those that not only demolish dance floors consistently but those whose mixes stand solid outside the realms of a club, DJ Cosmo is one such DJ. She shuns fads for a more visceral approach to her craft. And what a craftswoman she is! No wonder she's garnered mad props from legendary DJs like David Mancuso and François Kevorkian. For a taste of what this Bitches Brew alum is capable of, just one spin of the eclectic treat that is The Discotech of... will confirm exactly why... and her real name's not Lisa, to boot! June Joseph

### Palm Pictures/US/CD

The Last Minute is essentially a soundtrack to glittering guttercrime

and underworld Brit brutality. The movie went straight to video here in the States without much noise, but from what I gather, it ran along the lines of Guy Richie's work, urban, savvy and slickly grimy. The soundtrack covers the bases from chase to capture to codeine calm, offering up Leftfield's adrenaline pulse, El-P's menacing "Deep Space 9mm" step, and "Fly Hawaii." Luke Vibert and BJ Cole's euphoric Hawaiian slack-key guitar piece. Featuring also an original Amon Tobin track deep as a whale murmur with Bollywood drizzled on top, and a fierce thump from Bogdan Raczynski, Selena Hsu

### Plant/CD/US

If the title of this collection seems a bit up its own arse, it may not be so inaccurate after all. That is, if all of "Young New York" enjoys the rush of cocaine accompanied by the sounds of fresh, lo-fi disco punk and house-which, these days, most seem to. Mixed by Plant Bar owner and champion of all things DFA, Dominique Keegan, the collection is notable for its reliance on DFA material-three DFArelated mixes appear. That said, these tracks stand out in what is at best, a so-so representation of a particular sound. The DFA remix of Metro Area's "Orange Alert" alone makes it worth your subway tokens. Alexis Georgopoulos

### UNITED NATIONS OF FUTURE MUSIC VOLUME: 02

### Om/US/CD

Good vibes rumble again from the Bay Area, courtesy of The United Nations of Future Music, part deux. Om puts forth the prevailing cavalcade of Omies, with some new blood coursing through the downtempo house and hip-hop soundscapes. Kaskade and Rithma compute the audio equation with necessary groove-time components ("It's You It's Me" and "Love + Music" respectively): then Andy Caldwell (with Margues Wyatt) and J-Boogie express the resultant responses ("I Can't Wait" and "Curiosity," much respectively). People Under the Stairs, King Kooba and Afro-Mystik toss in one or more ingredients to this delicious cosmic slop, and UN of FM newcomers Clayton & Fulcrum, Late Night Alumni and Grande Synthe keep it all fresh and flowing. Dig in! Stacy Meyn

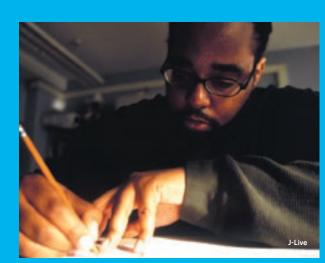
### Verve/US/CD

Verve's brilliant remixes are Hitchcockian in nature-repeated exposure reveals secrets previously hidden in the shadows (or vaults, as it were). VR 2 is somewhat tamer than the inaugural project, and a simultaneous release of an unmixed version CD smacks of a money-wasting decision, unfortunately. However, virtually the entire irst half is a keeper, with the Gotan Project's gypsy-tinged take on Sarah Vaughan being the biggest catch, while the Fila Brazillia/Cal Tjader number gets tastier with each listen. Felix Da Housecat contributes a near-stellar remix of Nina Simone's Sinnerman-much praise goes to any artist who can give us a dose of the late Ms. Simone in a new light. Margaret Murray

### WE CAME FROM BEYOND VOLUME 2

### Razor and Tie/US/CD

KXLU DJ Mike Nardone's latest compilation includes most of the hot rappers du jour in West Coast college radio: an ever-triumphant Planet Asia, the comical duo of People Under the Stairs, and J-Zone-who is, arguably, the underground's resident Archie Bunker, For all its fanfare, We Came From Beyond falls short of tremendous, but the tracks meet standard criteria for dope lyrics and phat beats. Among the highlights: Lifesavas flaunt their prole creds ("Government Cheese"), The Black Love Crew keenly compares life's ricissitudes to the naps in their fros ("Afro Joint"), and Aesop Rock deftly out-rhymes his cohort Slug ("Miss By a Mile"). Rachel Swan



### 7HEADS R BETTER THAN I, VOL 1: NO EDGE UP IN 7Heads/US/CD

Hip-hop has always been long on lyrical wordplay, but few emcees can best 7Heads's staggering lineup (J-Live, Asheru, El Da ensei). Using the tonsori al tastes of South African b-boys as a potent metaphor for the postapartheid struggle, the visionary label's latest comp includes new joints from Audissey (of Mass Influence) and NY up-andcomer Wordsworth (the name is apt, as his lanand free flowing), along-

side a rare remix of J-Live's seminal "Braggin' Writes" and special appearances by Talib Kweli and jazz band Soullive. Moreover, in an age when hip-hop comps usually double as only Hollywood blockbuster sales tools, abundant collections like this are like diamonds hauled from those deep South African mines-precious, and the result of years of hard labor. James Friedman

SHLRRR 96



latter-Form boat parties

and PS1, the trio regularly spins across the pond in Europe. Be on the lookout for

## ALEXI DELANO RIGHT BEFORE YOU (BRENNAN GREEN/JESPER DAHLBACK

way he always does it...deeeeeeeeep. Brennan Green's mix sweetly consummates his 303 love affair with African rhythms, showing you why he's one to watch. Dahlback's cut pushes the track's warm vocal with a gritty analog synth groove that'll absolutely kill floors. This one will stay in our boxes and will rock the most discriminating leftfield floors as well as the main room. Plav

### DISC 0 LYPSO Island Stories/US/2x12

a wonderful, original and obscure fusion of late-'70s disco with early-'80s studio the West Indies, Caribbean and Africa. Between Casual T's "Hands Off" and Billie

### 1050 EAST SEARCHIN

Cosmic Flux/US/12

OK, who can deny soulful vocal house with live instrumentation, especially if it's from Philly? After previously doin' the damn thing on vinyl with Alma Horton, beatsman Dwayne McClure a.k.a. Blizz, bassist Charles Webster and keyboardist Will Brock back vocalist Chris Dockins on a luminous and seriously testifyin' iam on the A-side that Charles Spencer sends into profound, demidisco orbit with his flipside remix. On the streets they call this the good good. Ron Nachmann

### ORLY ANGELO & THE ROSS STREET HUSTLERS GETTING IN IT

Fair Park/US/12

The newly revived Fair Park imprint hits the jackpot with this latest from Orly Angelo, a member of the Select Recordings posse. With smooth and sexy vocals courtesy of Suza Kanon, Angelo delivers a pair of seductive mixes-one deep, one downtemno-while Moisture Control (Waric Cameron and Mike Constantino) smother us in warm, late-night vibes with their two flipside remixes. A winner through and through. Luke Magnuson

### **BOBBY BEERGUT KEBABYLON BEATS VOL. 1**

Producer Robert Donnalove tosses down some

straight-ahead funky, Art of Noise-style big-beat house on the A-side of this slab for Sheffieldbased "filthy house" label Trashtalk. Check the flip for a more propulsive, filtered, overall safer version of the same, but for basic party action the A-side wins it here. Bravo. Ron Nachmann

### **DERRICK L. CARTER**

### SQUAREDANCING IN A ROUNDHOUSE RMXS Classic/UK/12

El Derrick of Carter squares up for two wellrounded mixes of the title track from his 2002 solo debut album. "B. H. Q. Revisits The Classics" has enough boomp for the most devout Chicago heads, while "The Remake" is toned down for deep-house lovers. Two very solid mixes for house neads of all shapes and sizes. Luke Magnuson

lew York's Play posse-Pete ung, Don Vu and Jay underground clubbers with Sapphire Lounge and ullivan Room for the past arshan Jesrani (Metro people in NYC for

what's rocking their boxes right now. Luke Magnuson

Courtsquare brings their best stuff to date. Alexi's original works smooth chords the

mechanics in songs that are equal parts deep disco, calypso, dub and funk, all from Cole's "Extra Carefully," this'll take you to a strange and intriguing place. Play

### VHS OR BETA SOLID GOLD (JOSHUA RMX) Stifle/US/12

Joshua never disappoints. Iz lays down another slab of butta deep-house with his signature bumpin' basslines, this time with a slicked-out, warm groove. We definitely rocked this one at the summer jams-it's got that mad outdoor vibe that makes you want to keep shakin' your booty. Play

Flip-Flop/UK/12 After numerous releases on labels like Geek and HDS, these screwheads finally start their own imprint with a three-tracker of simple vet effective tech-house bizness. "A-fraid" interlaces three twisted vocal samples with some squibby synths and chunky beats, while the flip gives up more funky melodic samples on "Bastardo" and some old-school keyboard lines on "Shakedown." Ron Nachmann

**METTA & JT LOVE A-FRAID** 

### FISH GO DEEP NIGHTS LIKE THESE Insnirit/HK/12

If you haven't already heard of Fish Go Deep through their releases on i! Records, Brique Rouge and Chez, you won't be able to avoid them after this latest Inspirit number drops. With life-affirming vocals courtesy of Tracy Kelliher. them little fishes produce two delicate ditties, while Inspirit's in-house producer, The Beard, scores a perfect 10 with his "Three Blades Dub." A huge summer number, Luke Magnuson

### GOOD SEX VALDEZ I WANT YOUR WIFE Barclay/UK/12

According to the breathily sung chant on this hugely thumping, subtly glam, minimal house monster, Mr. Valdez "wants no money," but your spouse will do just fine. And if she ignores the overstated B-side mixes in favor of the extended A-side, the airy, hypnotically arrogant attitude in his voice will get her, make no mistake. So chain her up before you play it, or she's gone, my friend. Walker Lindh

### TONY THOMAS INNER SPACE

Soma/UK/12

For over a decade, Tony Thomas has been making techno and house under a slew of aliases, but as of late his tribal-house sound seems to have found a home on Glasgow's ever-impressive Soma. "Inner Space" is an out-and-out peak-time bomb. Laced with dubbed vocals and echoed keys, the track's heavy 4/4 beats and hypnotic bongos should appeal to those of an H-Foundation, Onionz and Dano persuasion. Luke Magnuson

Fat, M\_nus and Sonicontinuum (the last named after the Gotham-based audio-visual artist collective that Ospina co-founded). Between finishing Algoritmo's upcoming remix of Sid & Fabio's "Crystal" on Switzerland's Mental Groove label and preparing for the duo's November performance at the Festival of Electronic & Industrial Sounds of Latin America in Bogota, Ospina let us know what platters she thinks matter. For more info, check www.sonicontinuum.com. Ron Nachmann

FALSE BEGINNER'S LUCK Plus8/US/12
Mathew Dear (False), revered as one of the most innovative minimal technouse producers, is unwinding some of the best "dirt glitch funk" around. These two subtle and refined trax exude a concentration and dedication worthy of keeping our pulses on +6, +7 and + 8. IO

### LOS HERMANOS TRES LH/US/12

DJ Rolando and Gerald Mithchell are two funky bros, never ceasing to astound us these days. Their third release on the LH label (branching out from UR's sturdy trunk) gracefully and exquisitely weaves abstract, wakeful disco tunes and rican beat trax in the best Detroit soul tradition. IO

### UNDO & VICKNOISE NOCTAMBULA Factor City/US/12

Two of Barcelona's most enthusiastic DIs bring us moving trax on the first release of their Factor City label. Floating melodies, punchy basslines and driving beats texturize these dreamy dancefloor friendly cuts with a bright mood,

### JEL FORD BUT WAIT...THERE'S MORE EP Tortured/UK/12x2

Head of design at Jericho Records, this clubeared techno engineer launches his debut appearance on Tortured with a diverse doublepack. From shuffled-up samba-like fillers, to dark, intensely layered melodic soundscapes, this EF proves effective for all kinds of crowds. PRAXIS

### HE PREMATURE WIG ENDLESS DUB

Skor Records/US/12

Ken Gibson presents an appropriately named EP here, as it's dubby through and through. Ken's version of "Endless Dub" comes complete with vocal accompaniment, which may or may not be your bag, baby. The flipside's "Hungry Monitor" brings cool tones, soothing like water, and hypnotic rhythms that rock you gently, though with a slight glitch feel. We also get a crunchy, tweaky remix of the title track by Elite Core Centipede to round out this bevy of solid minimal dub jams. Forest Green

### SINGLE CELL VS. BASS KITTENS CHECK IT Evenhunk/US/12

It's nice to hear something that you can tell took some time and skill. This is just what the doctor ordered, "Check It" is an uptempo, drummy track with lots of sampling, scratchy noises and a Cuban boatload of bass. It's a real high-energy dance lick that bangs the boom. "Down With Digital" on the flip has a slight old-school feel in the beat structure and sounds, but it's just thick, and man does it make the booties bounce. Its catchy synth lines and spacey breaks accentuate the driving beat. Chris Burfine

### OLID PLAYERS PART 2

Definition/GFR/12

Joining global forces, this EP reeks of what remixers from around the world can create via audio manipulation. From Tuomas Rantanen's hard driving mix to the more tuned yet atmospheric mix by Cozmic Spore, this twelve-inch has promise as an adequate percussive bridge. Definitely a solid complement to this label's versatile and enchanting discography. PRAXIS

### TONIO & THE HACKER CONNEXION Error 404/12/FR

One of France's leading exports teams up with electro/techno forefather The Hacker to install this label's debut title. Experimental synth patches lay atop an anticipated electro-esque techno jam, perfect for IDM laptop geeks. The upcoming titles from this young imprint seem promising, as names like Marco Bailey and Laurent Ho are to be dropped. PRAXIS

REVIEWS: ILANA

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and as Algoritmo with co-conspirator

GoodandEvil-on

### **UMEK VOICES OF AFRICA VOL.3**

Primate/IIK/12

This year's releases for Primate have only proven more powerful as the catalog grows, but this installment leaves much to question. Completing the compilation trilogy, Umek drops another organically influenced bit of minimal techno progression. The production is clean, of course, but this just lacks a solid hook and that expected Primate bang. PRAXIS

### Fak/FIN/12

These audio dimensions prove quite hot despite their parent country of Finland. Extremely unusual yet brilliantly mental, this compilation EP screams the direction of Drumcode from yesteryear. This collection features heavily saturated reverb covering screechy, loopy synths, a bit of distortion developing the percussion, and a light touch of refined keys, all packed in a Finland newspaper. A perfect cultural sampling. PRAXIS

### **7IP DIMRIMAN**

Perlon/GER/12

If you are into minimal techno, you know Perlon The saga continues with the label's 33<sup>rd</sup> release by Zip-a funky, clicky, groove thang replete with dissonant chord pulses. With his finger firmly pressed on the g-spot of dance, Zip continues or with the b-side, "Planet Curry," a barrage of offbeat blippiness that still maintains that amazing drive to make us dance. Anomalous! Chris Burfine & Forest Green







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Few epitomize the industrious, diverse San Francisco vibe like one they call J-Boogie, whose mama knows him as Justin Boland. J's been on the case for over a decade, spinning soul, jazz, funk, reggae, Latin, downbeat, nu-jazz, broken beat, 2-step, world beats, hip-hop and combinations thereof all over the damn place. He's a resident at San Francisco's Dub Mission Sundays and on Beatsauce, the award-winning underground hip-hop mix show on Bay Area station KUSF 90.3. Plus, he's been rolling a live organic DJ/musician fusion, J-Boogie's Dubtronic Science, for a good long minute. It's all culminated in Boland's recently released eponymous Dubtronic Science debut album on Om Records, a highly bumpin' chronicle of what millennial deep funkiness means in this Baghdad by the Bay. There's much more to this ladies man, all of which you can check out at www.jboogie.com. Meanwhile, here's how our man sees what's up in the nu-jazz and funk world.

### **BUFFET STYLE ORGANIC DISHES EP** On-Going/DMR/JPN/12

Un-toing/DMR/JPN/12

Picked up this little gem on a recent trip to Japan.

DMR is one of the best record stores in Tokyo, and apparently helped on the release of this EP. The Toshiyuki Goto, Soul Bossa and Lava tracks are all nice, jazzy sounding bossa vocal tracks, but the real gem here is the Jazztronik cut. They balance a nice Latin guitar line with some funky '80s synths and a super-soulful vocal performance from Asako Toki. This song makes you as happy as a fresh pair of kicks from Shibuya. J-B

### THE KEYSTONES FEAT. MALCOLM CATTO **SELECTIONS FROM THE ORIGINAL MOTION PIC-**TURE SOUNDTRACK BLOOD'S HAUL

### Now Again/US/12

If someone took the brass from Antibalas, some drum breaks from a nasty 45, and the freaky funkiness of Galt McDermott, you might be getting a little close to the sound of the Keystones. A truly funky record that entices some moody feelings about dominoes, drums

### REBIRTH THE JOURNEY IN Kajmere/US/12

The Rebirth is a funky sextet from LA who is doing a great job of blending the future and retro sounds of soul music. This 12-inch has a nice summertime vibe. and sounds great with the top down. Noelle, C-Quest, and Loslito from Breakestra provide sweet vocal harmonies over a saucy, laidback groove. *J-B* 

### RIMA LET IT GO Compost/GER/12

Three fat mixes of this beautiful tune featuring the lovely Julie Dexter on vocals. The Rima house mix is nice 'n' deep, with enough bass to keep your booty moving. The Titonton & Tejada remix makes you wanna body-rock and features some extra funky vibes those Cazal-sounding keys. Don't look back. J-B

### ND/A.S.E. GIVING UP/TANGO YA BA WENDO (STEVIE G RMXS)

The District of Columbia's own Stevie G finally gets a forum for his versatile remixing skills, and comes up aces on these two very different tracks. First, he gives Deborah Bond's ballad "Giving Up" a jumpin' nu-jazz re-rub, with grounding piano chords, a plucky bassline, and thumping percussion. On the flip, he brings A.S.E.'s kinda stiff drum machine-and-guitar African jam back to the lush land of organic percussion, resulting in a loose, rich reinterpretation. Ron Nachmann

### FAT FREDDY'S DROP HOPE Kartel/UK/12

Time for the world to fully wake up to this apparently magical, dub-infused live soul/funk/jazz group from New Zealand. Almost a year after getting their debut single of bub-bling reggae, "Midnight Marauders," picked up by discerning Berlin label Best Seven, the Drop hits us with a 10" of more laconic roots that's almost gospelly in its build and inspirational feel. "Hope" finds lead singer Joe Dukie chanting about "hope for a generation" and busting

out some jazzy call-and-response with the horn

sections in an orgy of heartfelt sonic soul. Flip for "Bluey," an equally subtle, almost cinematic bit of instrumental, Coltrane-inspired, early-AM jazz-reggae. Solid. Ron Nachmann

### COMIN' FROM WHERE I'M FROM

SoSoDef/US/12

Charlotte, NC man Hamilton's first album, 1996's XTC, was unjustly ignored in the first, D'angelo/Badu-dominated wave of nu-soul, but forget all that. He's back, and this title track to his new album lets you know that he hasn't fallen off a bit as a singer/songwriter. With a voice that evokes both Bobby Womack and Donny Hathaway, Hamilton throws down a bluesy chronicle of hard times and worry over a prime '70s-era existential soul backing. You think you got troubles-get this single and check my man's acapella. It'll wrench the heart right out of you. Edie Ahmeanit

### JEF DAM TIGERBALM

### Fenetik/UK/12

Your man Polar comes with a couple of burners over here. After a long, half-speed ambient intro, the Norweigan prince launches the

moody, loose, electro-tinged, uptempo and dead funky "Tigerbalm" into your earhole. On the flip's "Underwater" he heads in more of an easy jazz direction, but the focus remains on the stealthy beat and almost bossa bassline. Kid's been releasing solid material under this moniker for a long minute, and this is no exception. Ron Nachmann

### SOLID GROOVE DURSIDED MODELER ISLAND LIFE

### Dubsided/HK/12

So far so good with the nascent Dubsided label-they've busted out EPs for this spring and summer that bode very well for the future. Solid Groove gives up his namesake over four bastard tracks, from the swirling spliced-sample samba of "Show Me Su'm'n" to the grinningly titled bit of fractured house, "When We Heard Maurice Fulton," and the Madlib-styled "Now We Got To Bump." Modeler, meanwhile, throws down some Afro-tinged house for his title track before treating the flip to Luomo-ish house on "Gett Down" and stunning, laser-sharp electoconga funk on "Mint Condition." Walker Lindh

### Bitches Brew/UK/12

Yeah, the name that producers Combo and Alf Tumble came up with stands for Swedish

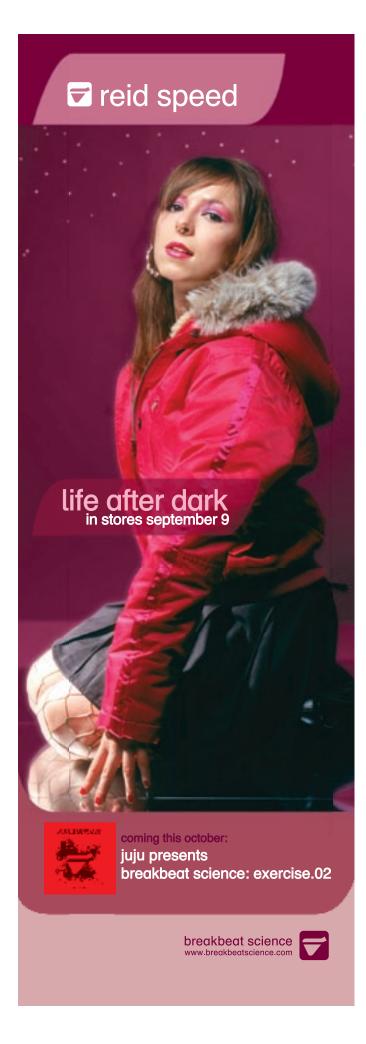
Underfed Music Operators. Good guess. Fortunately, such status hasn't prevented them from producing chunky Afro-housey rhythmic ventures for labels like Africanism/Yellow. Seasons and Trackmode. Here, the boys hand their own skinny asses to Bitches Brew amazons Cosmo and Nikki, who transform their benign bit of wahguitar and percussion-driven house (with vocals by Ugandan singer Sammy Kasule) into a simmering,

### TANTAN DOPESNOTFUNKAE

### Head 2 Toe/US/12

Booyaa! A true Bugz in the Attic-style bit of boosted broken beat right here courtesy of producer Jonatan Bäckelie. This guy wastes little time establishing a condensed, seething bit of uptempo synth-and-beat business with booming kicks and basstones on the one. Flip it over if need be for a more laidback, almost Nigerian highlife jazz remix, but the A-side here should do you just fine. Come again, Tantan! Walker Lindh

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### REVIEWS: HIGH CONTRAST

Drum & bass changed when . Majik's "Arabian Nights" first urned on then-17-year-old Welshman Lincoln Barrett to the possibilities of future abel manager Tony Colman cked up Link for an internship the label, it was on. Last year age 22, the kid had released s debut as High Contrast, rue Colors, a double-CD coloarty jams on New York's discerning Breakbeat Science label, and the single from that

album, "Return to Forever," charted in the UK long after the expiration date on d&b had supposedly passed. Kids this summer were still jocking that album's bright, buoyant, chunky and hearty vibe. With tracks like "Lovesick" and "Twilight's Last Gleaming" from Barrett's next album already making the advance rounds, reports are that the future looks bright. But how does the present look on the decks of this badman? Ron Nachmann

### MATRIX & DANNY J VERTIGO Metro/UK/12

I'm loving Matrix's new housey d&b sound, as heard on the massive "Trippin". It's not the usual Rhodes chords or disco loops-he takes influence from more contemporary artists like Rui Da Silva and Underworld. This track is really sweet, with a subtle vocal repeated and filtered in the background á la Underworld, which leads into an emotive three-note chord/bass riff-very tech-house sounding. It's a solid roller backed with a house mix by Goldtrix. HC

### KONSTA FLIRT MASH/UK/12

Third release from the Hospital off-shoot, and both sides have been getting major support from Fabio, Peshay, etc. "Flirt" is an epic, string-led Amen tune that rolls out nicely instead of being an ear-bashing tear-out. The flip's "What I Need" is liquid funk at its best, with a cool, summery vibe reminiscent of "Barcelona." Konsta hails from Helsinki-worldwide d&b, baby! HC

### LAROQUE/VICE VERSA SOMEONE LIKE YOU Good Looking/UK/12

Another split single from the long-running GLR. These are two new artists who are definitely worth looking out for. Laroque has a number of tracks around on dubplate at the moment that are causing a buzz. His track here has a super-crisp "live" break that underpins a warm bass groove and sparkling Rhodes and strings. Vice Versa comes with a catchy funk bass lick right from the start, which they then build upon as the tune rolls, gaining momentum with hi-speed percussion and a Calibre-esque vocal edit. HC

### BIG BUD SOUNDTRACK Sound-Tray/IJK/12

### Advanced listeners can attempt to wrap their

skulls around the twisted "Soundtrack," but don't lose faith if you're not feeling it. Head straight to the flipside's "Blu 4 U" for a proper celestial fix that's haunting and inspiring in intensity and vision. Taking his time in rolling things out, Big Bud lets the cinematic details slowly add up before an otherworldly vocal lays it all on the line and lifts you away. Chris Muniz.

### **COMMIX GIVE U EVERYTHING**

### Tangent/UK/12 Although John B's enviable reputation has grown

in tandem with his now legendary locks, few of his sprawling roster have managed to break free from under the fearsome shadow of their patriarch. While the polite, r&b-flecked orientation of new signing Commix is unlikely to change the world, the trio's competent use of house-like keys and soul vocalist JJ is certain to whet the appetites of Fabio followers. Kingsley Marshall

### DILLINJA GOOD GIBL

### Valve/UK/12

A nice, long, sweet female vocal intro here catches you off-guard-is this truly the 'ja? But then those big, bad, buzzy distorted bass synths. drop amongst a shower of "Bo!"s over a manic Amen feast, and what can you say? Your man has been killing it with that Valve sound system, and this one from the upcoming album is full of promise. Walker Lindh

### GONNA BE MINE/GET IT ON

### Nu Directions/UK/12

On this split, Australian Greg Packer and Japanese duo Pentagon let loose a couple of soulful burners. Packer's lovely, 1-2 percussion punch buovs some lacv, warm synth work and

sliced female vocal samples. As usual, Packer's got the composition locked with some excellent breakdowns. On the flip, Pentagon go the jazzy Rhodes route for the intro, and then bust out some almost bossa acoustic guitar for the meat of this easy-going chune. A summery slab for the fall-you'll get used to it. Ron Nachmann

### SONIC AND SILVER SPACE CADET

### Snace/UK/12

Out of the recent tide of new labels clogging the shelves, Sonic's Space imprint is one of the few to have successfully carved out its own niche rather than touting the same threadbare platinum breaks. Here. Sonic & Silver offer two more majestic pieces, in which zero-gravity grooves tumble within an empirical hue of interweaving melodies. Recommended. Kingsley Marshall

### WTHANG SCORNED

### Black Sun Empire/UK/12

The Norwegian duo turn up the heat with a pair of ungodly killers aimed strictly at the dancefloor. Vibe on the smooth, deceptive intro of "Scorned" before things turn rattlesnake at the drop. If you've still got the energy, check the hard-driving remix of Benjie's "Al" on the flip for a touch of hioctane fuel sure to spark that late-night ignition. Rinse out! Chris Muniz.

### STRIDER TRILBALISM

### Reatz/IIK/12

Dillinja and Lemon D's Valve subsidiary presents new signing Strider, who rises to the occasion by dropping a pair of grooves that load everything short of the kitchen sink into the sampler. While the orchestral sweep of the A-side makes some sense of a chaotic blend of chirpy clicks and whistles, the flip steps up with an authentic dub rinse-a squiggle of low-frequency shaking like Lee Perry on PCP. Great. Kingsley Marshall



### HIP-HOP GUEST REVIEWS: DOC FU

San Francisco hip-hop/dancehall DJ Doc u has been holding it down and playing Il over the damn city for many years. Getting his start with the Future Primitive rew, the guy's been standing tall, tearin' inyl and sharing decks with the likes of Peanut Butter Wolf, Z-Trip, Shortkut, Rob Swift, DJ Quest and Messrs Dibbs and Scruff, and Cut Chemist. The year 2003 has been break-out for the good Doc: he played in Tokyo with current world champ DJ Kentaro, and he's now the West Coast our DJ for Def Jux star Mr. Lif (in whose video, "Life in the Plantation," Doc Fu plays, yep, the DJ). So what's Doc Fu got to play

### AKROBATIK FEAT. MR. LIF WRECK DEM Coup D'Etat/US/12

Opening with a dubbed out descending rattle, this is battle rhyme bravado heaven. As Guru exclaims throughout the song..."watch these fly niggas show you how to rhyme asshole!!!" *DF* 

### E-40 GASOLINE Jive/US/12

Rick Rock's beat crushes anything in its path. E-40 can just kill it verbally, but peep his genius on the Bay Area's "grindin" remix. This joint would work in any club situation. DF

### LYRICS BORN CALLING OUT Quannum/US/12

This is how you would set off a neighborhood block party!!! Lyrics' virtuosity and Joyo's uplifting b-girl style singing ride nicely atop a fluid bassline. This would've got played at Mr. Five's for sure!! *DF* 

### PHARAOHE MONCH AGENT ORANGE Rawkus/US/12

A distorted keyboard opens into a loud drum kit that gives Pharaohe the opportunity to voice his displeasure with the current state of our country's politics. Not for the shook ones... DF

### **AZEEM FIVE OOH** Romh/IIS/12

The neo-hooligan rhymesmith who unleashed Craft Classic in 2001 returns this year with more car-quaking beats and curveball lyrics. As always, Azeem rhymes about whatever pops into his sideways mind-"Five Ooh" is about rappers who confess to crimes in their songs and get indicted for them. Weird, but trenchant. Rachel Swan

### DIVERSE EXPLOSIVE

### Chocolate Industries/US/12

Chicago MC Diverse gives us more excruciatingly well-produced tastes from his eternally forthcoming debut album. The title track finds Di and Lyrics Born rhyming with the guickness over an RJD2-produced stomper as they remain "just one step from Zion/tryin' to keep it in perspective." On the flip, Madlib provides the jazzy backing to Diverse's lyrical look at the inner city. Tight-now bring the damn full-length already.

### D.I 7FPH FI OOR WAX

### Wide Hive/US/12

Zeph has been demolishing dancefloors and making other DJs green with envy by playing the testpressing of this single in clubs for the past month or so. Now the rest of us can finally have this ridiculously dope burner for ourselves. The track is discofied in a completely good way, with a nicely compressed bassline leading the headnodic charge. Add in great b-boy rhymes by Rashaan Ahmad, plus a high-quality b-side, and you've got one of the best 12-inches of the year. Pete Babb

### HEZEKIAH GYPSY SI ANG

### Soulspazm/US/12

On "Gypsy Slang" Hezekiah hits you with the real over an intricate, vibey beat and blazing cuts by DJ Statik. His fellow Philly representative Bahamadia opens the song with a harder-thanusual delivery that fits the track perfectly. "Gasoline" on the flip is a heavy rocker on which Hez gets all political on your ass; luckily, he has the smarts and style to back it up. Ross Hogg

### NFINITE LIVEZ SUMFINK 4 NAFINK LOTEK HIEL PERCOLATOR

### Rin Dada/UK/12

Brit label Big Dada continues on its death-orglory crusade to kick a hole in hip-hop's speaker On "Sumfink...", mad professor MC Infinite Livez (whom XLR8R featured all big-eared in issue 68) rips "Money for Nothing" for an image-filled smack-up of "lady-boy" mic pretenders over producer Blufoot's trippy beat. His bouncement-ish flipside, "Ugetdehseed," proves less effective. Wayne Bennett's Lotek Hifi simply brings it with a disco-tinged bit of bwippy dancehall-hop in two vocal versions: one with Bennett and Jack Radics's son Earl J. and the flip with Wayne Paul and Aurelius, Murdah tune! Big tings for da Dada.

### LACKS THE IDIOLOGY Earth Angel/US/12

Don't be fooled: Lacks ain't lackin' in rhymes or beats. The artist first heard as Lacksidaisycal on Jay-Dee's Welcome to Detroit lays down his own Motor City welcome mat on "The Idiology" With bouncy beats and a clever, laidback rhyme style, his command to "bang this in your whips" will be easiv met. On the flip's "Hustolin" 01 and Fe-Niks join

Lacks over an insistently funky bassline. Ross Hogg

### KEV BROWN ALLWAYS

### LITTLE BROTHER THE WAY YOU DO IT ARR/IIS/12

You have no idea who Kev Brown is, but you dig him. He produced some of the smoothest cuts on Jazzy Jeff's aptly titled Magnificent LP. "Allways" finds him ruminating on affairs d'amour over sexy guitars; "Can't Stay Away" on the flip features Grap Luva and Little Brother's Phonte over a buttery bassline. Little Brother's 9th Wonder lends his genius to the "Allways" remix, as he does to his group's own "The Way You Do It," a Southern "Electric Relaxation" (are those mandolins and fiddles?). Their open honesty and heartfelt harmonies more than legitimize the group's enormous hype. Ross Hogg

### Outta Nowhere/US/12

Whether Neb Love, Bahamadia, and Spontaneous are the hardest rappers since Eazy caught the virus is a point of contention, but they definitely roll deep. On "Global," the three gravel ly voiced emcees rollerskate over a skronky, spacey beat. The song's deliciously nerve-rattling discord almost compensates for its pedestrian lyrics. Rachel Swan



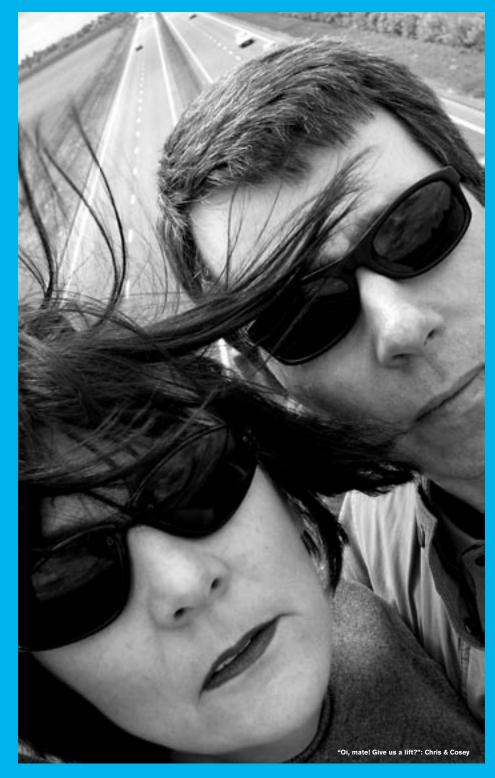


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# **ATMOSPHERESEVEN'S TRAVELS**





# LEFTFIELD GUEST REVIEWS: CHRIS & COSEY/CARTER TUTTI

Synth-pop revivalists and experimental types alike would be wise to recognize the contributions of Chris Carter and Cosey Fanni Tutti. After revolutionizing electronic music as part of pioneer industrial group Throbbing Gristle, the couple proceeded to influence the whole synth-pop genre as Chris & Cosey and CTI, releasing 20 albums and numerous singles over the subsequent quartercentury, maintaining a resolutely uncommercial sense of opaque style and mystery. Now revamping operations-including, yep, DJ gigs-as Carter Tutti, the duo has released the live enhanced CD C&C Luchtbal on CTI Records. They'll soon make history in May of '04 as Throbbing Gristle reunites for one performance at Camber Sands in the UK. Info on all this and more is at www.chrisand-cosey.com. Meanwhile, let's see what these legends make of three releases, each of which are made up of untitled tracks. Ron Nachmann

### ANT UNCONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT Angstrom/FRA/<u>CD-EP</u>

This far-from-unpleasant EP transports you into strange territories of your imagination. The tracks here range from surreal electronika landscapes to listenable '50s-sci-fi-style *musique concrete* to something reminiscent of Martin Denny put through some kind of weirdness filter. Track five sounds a bit like Kraftwerk jamming over the other three tracks, plus a dash of Kodo and random cut-ups that echo the sound. It's the most accessible track on the EP and certainly one for our DJ playlist. *CT* 

### SCHUBERT GHOST NOTES Statik

### Entertainment/GER/12

Is that a scratch on track one or is it intentional? Hard to tell with vinyl, and just as you're lost in pondering, the beat kicks in, and it sounds good at both 33 1/3rpm and 45rpm. What more can we say? We'll be Dling with it. The technofied track two uses nice underlying sound effects as an effective way to mutate from one sound to another and into a dirty rhythm that's reminiscent of "What a Day," an early Throbbing Gristle beat. On the flip, track three is like Teutonic industrial techno by numbers, while track four features an electro rhythm and bassline over an Orb-like sound-think techno meets fluffy clouds. To us it sounds more interesting than the first track, and would work well as a mashing track. CT

### SIGUR RÓS [UNTITLED] Fat Cat/UK/CD+DVD

Some of the most inspiring music we've heard in years. Track one features plaintive piano and voice that have a "holy" hymn like quality about them, reminiscent of that echoey piano you heard in the school hall. Track two's real and sampled voices have a tender vulnerability that totally seduces you into a state of utter surrender. The third track's vocals sound like they were sung by Gizmo from *Gremlins*, and would sound incongruous if used by anyone without this group's immense skill. Sigur Rós's music embraces and strokes all your senses and leaves you with a feeling of calm and sensibility. The accompanying DVD is just as exceptional. This EP is a masterly creative, eloquent and intelligent work. Gracious thanks to Sigur Rós. CT

### APPARAT ORGAN QUARTET ROMANTIKA Duophonic/UK/CD

Wherein Icelands's psychedelic minimalists give us three variations on the same theme and in the process come off like Terry Riley, Kraftwerk, Goblin and early Stereolab (think "Simple Headphone Mind") if they'd all been brought up on Icelandic folk music and went to the video arcade every day after school. Alexis Georgopoulos

### DIE ELEKTRISCHEN Dielectric/US/12

Oakland man Drew Webster has taken a chance launching an experimental label in this economic climate, but his 12", the label's fourth, shows the guy means business. From Throbbing Gristle-ish noise to spacious and

opaque ambient soundscapes to harsh industrial beat jams that invoke the UK's Sweatbox label, Drew lays down that neighbor-irritating shit. Nice. *Ron Nachmann* 

### MARTIN HORNTVETH THE SKULL EP

Smalltown Supersound/UK/CD
Norwegian jazz-not-jazz supergroup Jaga
Jazzist drummer and all-around overachiever
works out some angst in the form of glacial
atmospheres and staccato breakcore. Though
not as extreme as last year's "Fast Motion EP;"
"Radio/TA/Sleep" still manages to
bludgeon any competition in eyeshot, while
"Szakal is Home for Xmas" shows Horntveth is
really just a sensitive guy trying to work it out.
Alexis Georgopoulos

### THE RAPTURE/THE JUAN MCLEAN THE KILLING/GIVE ME EVERY LITTLE THING

### FA/US/12

The most hyped label on the planet returns with two white funk jams spawned for-and surely from-powder of the same hue. "Killing" will undoubtedly raise the Rapture's stock, sounding as it does like A Certain Ratio gone hip-hop circa 1983, while the Juan Mclean gives us some schoolyard robofunk not unlike Egyptian Lover and Malcolm Catto at a rave with 808 State. Pundits and DJs alike will drool onto their mirrors. Alexis Georgopoulos

### TEAM DOYOBI MOD TRUCKIN' Skam/UK/7

Typically masterful glitchy rhythm 'n' noise business from this pair in anticipation of their new album, *Choose Your Own Adventure*. The title

track gives you a surprisingly tuneful ride home amongst the chaos, while the B-side's "Air Combat Emulator" throws synth-pop and electro down the stairs. Happy damage. Walker Lindh

### MILES TILMANN OVER AND THROUGH EP Consumers Research and Development/US/10

The luscious, cotton candy-blue 10-inch vinyl matches the bright new music from Miles Tilmann, a grossly underrated American talent. In the vein of his last 7-inch for Sub:marine, this one shakes off the dark ambient chill of Tilmann's previous work, opting instead for a chime-and-bell intro on "I've Already Forgotten," its gentle sway recalling Casino Vs. Japan. "Mimi" and "Monday" are uptempo IDM, while the b-side echoes Metamatics and 33.3. Exquisite. Heath K. Hignight









Whether you recognize him as the guy who launched the nton Warriors to renown, or the man behind the Mob labe (www.mobrecords.com, home of Beber & Tamara), or the dread at the controls who folows Digweed on 2AM London's KISS 100 FM, you petter know that Tayo was we call the breaks sides his residencies a ugged Out, Big Beat sement Jaxx's low-profi

Rooty club in Brixton, Tayo's DJed in Australia, Asia, America and Europe, and mixed top-notch CDs for labels like Distinctive and Streetbeats. "Wicked Dub Tayo's collab single earlier this year with Acid Rockers Uptown on Skint, has gone down a monster, and the year's not done yet. His Mob label has recently presented the spinning public with new singles by Initial Research, Santos and Plastic Pervert. And if you know what's good for ya, you'll turn up at the man's Mob Deep monthly at Turnmills in the heart of London. Fire it up, selecta! In the words of Bobby Byrd, "What you gonna play now?" Ron Nachmann

### ATOMIC HOOLIGAN BIG TIME THEREMONE Botchit & Scarper

moment. These are big-room breaks with kick drums to stomp your feet to. Look out

Deekline and his new partner Wizard offer up a Spanish guitar á la Justin, and beats

### SHUT UP AND DANCE NOVA SUAD

vocal, but stick to the instrumental original. A 4/4 track with a breaks attitude and a

### DANNY WEED SALT BEEF White/UK/12

Slurp, slurp! Eat too many mad east London cows and this is what happens. More unmistak-

### Re:Connect/UK/12

What a pair these two are. Glen FFS and the Madam hand over a rough one here, building off the chanted title into a proper head-nodding rhythm that breaks down into a powerhouse bass-driven mover peppered with enough background conga and shaker bits to keep it earthbound. Aside from the unfortunate, shrill synth bits in the last third, this one's a winner, and Glen's dub on the flip gives up some more elastic bassline madness. Run it. Ron Nachmann

### HATCHA DUB EXPRESS

### Tempa/UK/12

After his quality Dubstep Allstars compilation. Hatcha returns with his first solo release on Tempa. Big Apple's beats-barrow-bwoy ups the tribal ante and delivers this three-tracker of snarling, militant skunk-step, prowling through Middle Eastern chants and deep cinematic ambience with rollin congas, whiplash torture samples and broken bashment riddims. Awesome styles for one so young. Kode9

### JINX TURBO!

### Dorigen/UK/12

Ah, here's the ticket-spry, springy, spare breaks from Northern England. This duo know how to turn it out, with a stripped-down, way-funky skeleton of a rhythm (which at its core recalls the spirit of James Brown) sprinkled with wonderful effects and boosted by a simple bassline. On the flip, SpinCycle gives it a cool, more organic remix with lovely vocal melodies over the top. Overall, this is solid. Walker Lindh

### **REVIEWS: TAYO**

Botchit are back on form, and Atomic Hooligan are going through the roof at the for their official remix of Underworld's "Born Slippy." Tayo

### **DEEKLINE & WIZARD SUN IS SHINING Botchit & Scarper**

large like Luther Vandross. Dee's recent output is more controlled, less ravey but still exciting as before. A proper roller that's tough but funky like a train Tayo

bassline that us amateurs can only dream about. Tayo

# Like Mr. Weed's earlier "Creeper," but even bet

ably tasty grime from Roll Deep. Bloated cello and bass chase each other in an octave zig zag. ter. Words haven't quite caught up with this shit and even a bit of that housev shuffle, though not yet! Clearly the crew's best standalone riddim to date. Best served with MC spit. Moo! Kode9 FUTURE FUNK SOLIAD VS. MADAM BREAKS

### I WANT YOU

Soulja/UK/12 London's very own P-man goes from strength to strength with this latest 12. From the sublow-slung 3-step tech of "Pump..." to the crisp and lively hardcore grime of the flip's "White Gloves," Plasticman continues to push the limits of postgarage electro-bashment. Check "White Gloves" in particular for some lovely programming tricks and decoys. Probably post-garage's most exciting producer, and no. he hadn't heard of Hawtin, Kode9

### R NOBODY GONNA STOP US

**MELLOW & RIVERA RUG CUTTING** 

They may not be making what most consider nu-

breaks, but screw it: Hamburg-based Pete Rivera

and Mellow bring it back to the good old-fashioned

breakbeats here (enough that you can forget the

slower tempo) with all the hard nu-breaks effects

enough to be obnoxious. As Super Style, UK boys

Dan Holmes and Neil Simons give it a jaunty, tough,

almost Prince-ish remix, with enough '00 boost to

keep it from going too retro. Ron Nachmann

**PLASTICMAN PUMP UP THE JAM** 

Muto/GER/12

### TCR/UK/10

Like XLR8R magazine, Britain's longest-running breaks label has turned 10 years old, and they're celebrating with a series of ten 10" singles (clever, yes), starting with this hot one by Autstralian knob-twiddler Paul Smith. Old Paul throws down a heavyweight little chunk of loping nu-beat with vocodered vox and an epic break down/buildup in the middle. Fellow Aussie Friendly gives it a marching, '80s electro-poptinged rerub on the flip, and a limited-edition commemorative series is born. Edie Ahmeanit

### **WONDER WHAT**

### Dumn Valve/IIK/12

"What" the fuck? A final rusty nail in the coffin of dance music? More off-key riddims from the Roll Deep family, A stilted East-beat half-steppa with the sickest bass refrain and most delicate Chinese keys. It might stop you dancing, but it certainly won't let you leave the floor. Practically flatline business for winter 2003. Immaculately cold and grimey. Kode9



As you eagerly read this column hunkered down low there in the back of class, rudely ignoring your Psychology professor's award winning dissertation on the mechanics of the greater cerebral cortex. I'm probably speeding noisily across the High Plains on the California Zephyr, loaded to the tits on Percocets and brandy, my brain a glorious low hummmm thanks to a swealtering respite in that most wonderful of all American cities, Chicago. All beer and baseball and 10-pound pizzas and El trains and Oak Street Beach and Kerpan family reunions...Ahh, Chicago, a thing of mystery, drunkenness and confusion...Afternoon thunderstorms and a million gallons of Old Style waiting to be drunk in musty old taverns. Man, I love that town, But now, headed up through the Rockies and reading Gary Snyder as the brandy supply wanes and the red wine takes hold, I feel the West creeping back into me, like William Blake in Dead Man. The land itself slowly changes with the cooling climate as we round each bend and come nearer and nearer to home...Good old fog-shrouded San Francisco as seen from the Bay Bridge-always warms my heart, even if I'm just returning from a night of drinking at the Acme Bar on San Pablo in Berkelev... Even if we're still waiting for the next Big One just to shake things up good and scare away the remainder of the neauveau-riche techno-geeks so we can get back to some true High Wierdness and Low Art...

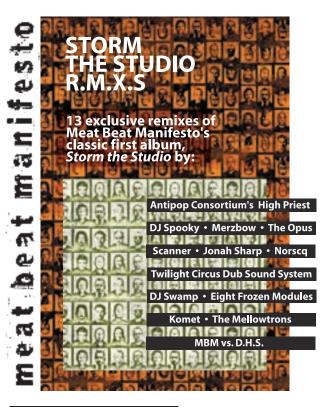
Speaking of good times, check out my man Moodey's new band project featuring the saxaphone genius of David Boyce from the Broun Fellinis, DJ B-Love and others in a mad improve jazzfunk stew called DICTATE. "We're like the black Journey." says Moodey late one Sunday after a few rounds of in-store cocktails at Open Mind Music on Divisadero. The powerfully enigmatic Dr. Landau pours the libations and we all go home with records we regretted the next day. What's up with San Francisco record stores and their afternoon cocktail hours? Be sure to visit the perennially jolly Victor at BPM on Hayes for a Heineken or five on any given Sunday... and speaking of bad hair-metal, my new power-rock cover band is called KOOK HAMMER, and we'll be playing Ruthie's Inn sometime soon...You gotta love the SUNSET: sun doesn't shine for weeks on end as the

rest of California melts like some silicone wet dream, and then boom! Amazing day. Fog to the North, fog to the South, and the Vortex of Good right there at South Ocean Beach, the Epicenter of Yum. A little wine, a crazy little dog, a lots of rolling in the sand... Thank the good lads from Big Daddy magazine in Nottingham for bringing us GRAND SLAM, a killer new rag full of indepth interviews with classic hip-hop artists and forgotten funk heroes, graf flicks from around the way and rare photos from the golden age of this here beat-head culture. Issue 1 fea-



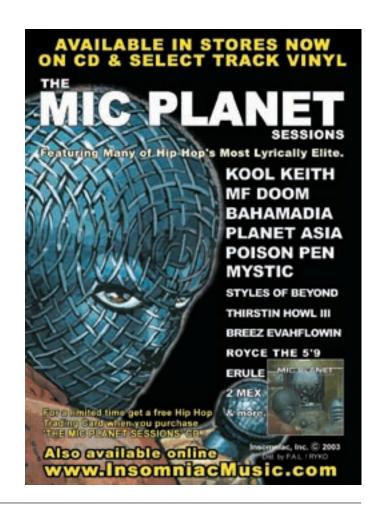
tures the best run-down on mastermixes and tape editors ever compiled...Pick up the new MUM'S THE WORD, "People Keep Movin". "Say It," featuring Declaime (a.k.a. Dudley Perkins), is the BOMB. Also peep "Know" with Natty Roots and LMNO, and "Generation X(OLO)" for flipping a Zorba the Greek sample-good fucking god!...Went to a groovy warehouse jam the other weekend and caught the next big thing: burlesquestripper/jug band/gypsy/funk fusion. They're called the YARD DOGS and you need to catch them NOW, even if their only gigs are in an abandoned house on an Oregon roadside or at Burning Man. My man BING JI LING was at that show and passed me his new CD, Doodle Loot Doodle A Doo, and man, this guy and Dudley Perkins need to get together and host a night on Clement Street. Some twisted Sammy Davis Jr.-meets-Tiny Tim shit. With ice cream and hot chicks...

Is that 13 items, yet? I gotta get back to my, ahem, "travelling companion" in my private sleeper compartment...OK, let's see: the new DEEP CON 4 is chock full of treats and well worth a purchase...Check the Funky Lowlives remix of DIZZY GILLESPIE's "Manteca" on Verve...GOD-DES is the SHIZ-NIT! Her self released "the E.P." needs to see the light of day on vinyl so more folks hear this in the clubs. For info hit flybutch33@hotmail.com... And that goes for DJ 4AM's brilliant "Sex, Darwinism and the Jungles of Hades" too... Peep LACKS's "The Ideology" on his Atlanta-based Earth Angel label...And big up Frisco writers with SETS's "Ew-Mama" on Alcatraz Entertainment...Great stuff from TRIBECA "Throw Heat" w/ Doujah Raze, new DJ ZEPH on Wide Hive, VAUGHN LA ROCK "Relax N' Chill" and DEEP DICKOLLECTIVE's "Them Niggas Done Went And Said...," but the bar car is calling, so I must be out like Damian Moss...



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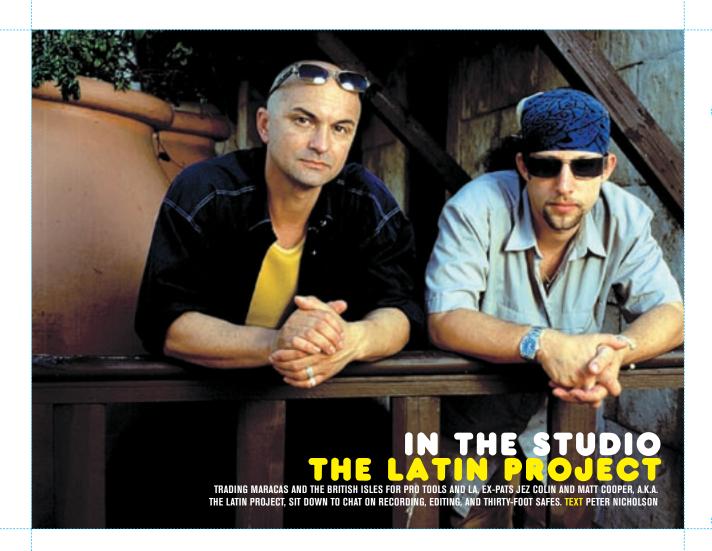












Combining dance music and Latin elements is not exactly unheard of, but on Nueva Musica, the Latin Project has found surprising success. Much of the credit can be attributed to the fact that Jez Colin and Matt Cooper aren't just a couple of DJs stringing beats together with some salsa samples. Colin co-founded Stateside acid jazz band the Solsonics before moving on to remix Sade. Biörk and more. Cooper has recorded five accomplished albums for UK label Dorado as Outside and is a frequent collaborator with Incognito. All this experience adds up to some serious studio skills, hinted at in their first Latin Project single, 2001's well-received "En Fuego". Buoyed by the response, the pair of British ex-pats recorded Nueva Musica in LA and London, with a few trips to Rio thrown in for good measure. The result is an organic blend of electronic and Latin sounds structured on a refreshingly even playing field.

### XLR8R: Were there any special techniques used to fuse the live instrumentation with the computer-based elements?

Jez Colin: We looped a lot of our own live playing, but we wanted to give it a sampled feel, so we spent a lot of time mixing down different tracks of live percussion, for example, to stereo tracks to give them a looped feel. When we did that, we processed them through tube gear, distorted them, and did all that kind of stuff.

### XLR8R: What are your pet pieces of equipment?

JC: I really like the Line 6 Amp Farm and the Filter Pro and I process a lot of stuff through those. As far as the front-end goes for microphones and guitars, anything that involves taking a live instrument and putting it into Pro Tools, I really like the Focusrite [ISA 430] Producer Pack. It wasn't cheap, but it's just really solid and you can plug an instrument straight into it and it goes straight to the digital input in Pro Tools.

### XLR8R: Where was the album recorded?

JC: We started off the recording at Matt's studio in England and at my studio, which at the time was in Laurel Canyon. During the process of recording, I moved my studio into a 1920's mansion owned by Dieter Maier of Yello. He's got a fullon two million dollar Euphonic studio, and the room that I've got is attached to his studio, which includes a thirty-foot safe that was used to party in during prohibition and is now the vocal booth. There's a lot of character here.

### XLR8R: Compared to your days with Solsonics around 10 years ago, how much has the technical aspect of making music changed?

JC: Back then, I was using samplers and an Atari computer. And anything that was recorded onto a hard disk was on the Akai sampler-it was all about making the most of 20 seconds of sampling time. Now it's gotten to the point where I have two different software samplers in Cubase, Pro Tools-which I can record pretty much as many pieces of music into as I want-and unlimited amounts of programming tracks. So, sonically, there's a lot more to choose from now. But I'm basically taking the same approach, where I'm trying to create a hybrid between programmed music and live musicianship.

### XLR8R: Do you find yourself doing a lot more editing now that you have all this capability to put stuff into the tracks?

JC: Actually, I've come to the point where I make decisions earlier on in the process, and commit those sounds to a Pro Tools track. I typically bounce down background vocals and anything that can mixed-down to two tracks instead of having it on eight tracks. I make those editing decisions quicker than I used to. As soon as I find a great kick drum or a great snare in my sampler, I'll put it into Pro Tools and it's there; it's done. I might EQ it later; I might compress it differently; I may even bus it out and run it through a piece of tube gear; but once I've found that sound, I'll commit to it quickly.



# 24-BIT **DIGITAL** MIXING

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### 71MACHINES

### **TOTALLY RAD**

RadiaL, Cycling '74's answer to Ableton Live-like loop players. ups the ante in terms of usefulness and performance. Created by San Francisco artist Jhno (responsible for his own experimental ambient releases, as well as the excellent Spool album from several years back), the software excels in functionality

of the interface and allows for the use of a wide range of file types. Circular displays (which resemble a bunch of shimmering, psychedelic pinwheels) represent the

audio file (AIFF, WAV, MP3 and QuickTime), which can easily be modified in time and pitch, or with very cool high pass and low pass filters (controlled by a single, clickable line), and synced to a number of internal or external sources. RadiaL records directly to hard disk, on the fly and without interrupting playback. Made within Cycling '74's premiere software platform Max/MSP, RadiaL also allows for a high degree of customization to live, studio or explorative applications. It supports many

> ins, including some extremely fun C74 Pluggo plug-ins that come with purchase. In the market for loop-playback software? Be sure to check RadiaL's free demo download before you buy anything else! Rob Riddle MSRP: \$249

control devices, multi-channel audio In/Out and VST plug-

>> IN THE MARKET FOR LOOP-PLAYBACK SOFT-WARE? BE SURE TO CHECK RADIAL'S FREE DEMO

DOWNLOAD BEFORE YOU

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### IT'S A MOD, MOD, MOD, MOD WORLD

The original modular Moog synthesizers were massive, wonderful behemoths capable of beautiful and ugly musical variations, sequences and even the voice of R2D2. Many companies have attempted to create the software equivalent of these vaunted synths and finally, someone has done it to such exacting standards that Bob Moog has given his stamp of approval. The amount of sound you can get from just the presets on the Arturia Moog Modular V is staggering. Once you learn a bit about synthesis, the possibilities are unlimited. The beauty of the software is that you can move all the cables around yourself (much like Propellerheads Reason), getting endless varieties of phat mono and polyphonic analog sounding lines. Separate views allow you to use a step sequencer (based on the Moog 960) and design your own sounds with whatever oscillators, LFOs, filters and VCAs you feel like. The bottom line: this thing sounds really good. Really, really good. Once you own this software, it's very difficult not to use it on every single piece of music you produce. True, you can't be all

cool and zip around on stage like Stereolah or Radiohead and stick your plugs in lots of holes and connect cables and twiddle knobs, but hev, even Tomita and Jean Michel Jarre couldn't save presets like this piece of software can. And who said laptops with lots of presets aren't sexy? Oh, right, everyone. Unless you have the thousands of dollars needed for the original, the Moog Modular V is definitely the way to go. Jesse Terry MSRP: \$329

www.arturia.com



### QUICKIE

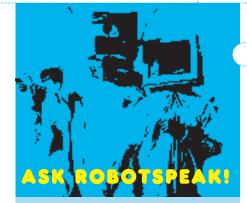
### Quaketrap MoPhreak Refill

This is a high quality set of sounds (AIFFS, REX files and loops) for use with Reason or other sampling studio software. Tons of excellent drums and loops from live musicians on the Quake Trap label, as well as hundreds of weird audio clips and interviews with the people who call Haight St. and Golden Gate Park their home. Jesse Terry



Pros: Excellent, royalty free, creative live and artificial drum sounds, ambient noises and tripped out loops. A stoner philosophy goldmine.

Cons: Listening to trustafarians and crackheads on Haight St. may eventually make you suicidal MSRP: \$24.95



It's XLR8R's x-cellent gear advice column, where you the reader put your confounding questions to the music technology experts at computer gear shop Robotspeak. Got a query about your bedroom, studio production or DJ gear? Send it to: tomas@xlr8r.com with "Ask Robotspeak" in the subject line, and your answer will appear in next issue.

### Dear Robotspeak,

I'd like to buy a laptop to use synthesis programs like Tassman, Longe Lizard, M-Tron and Oddity, Lalready use real synths (Korg Z1. Waldorf Microwave XT, Juno6, Minikorg 700s). Basically, the laptop would complete my setup. I thought about buying a Fujitsu LifeBook C2220, 256 MB, 30GB, combo drive, Intel 2.4 GHz (\$1399), I'd also buy an M-Audio Ozone controller for portability. Is that a good choice? What's the best deal around for a laptop dedicated to music?

Charles Beullac

It just so happens that I'm in the market for a laptop myself. I am a devoted a Mac user. However, when looking at price versus power, I'm forced to look at Windows-based machines. I think if I were to do this today I would purchase a refurbished Dell Inspirion 8200. The prices are great and Dell tends to add a minimum of needless extras. Dell has also treated me well in the past. Fujitsu and Compaq are also decent bets, Vaios are nice too, but they tend to cost as much as the Apples.

My advice would be to buy a laptop with a Pentium 4 processor chip, not the 4M or Centrino chips, as these are designed for better battery life at the expense of power. Also, make sure the internal hard drive is a 5400 RPM.

I have included two links for you to look at. The first is to a sound card manufacturer's site where they did a comparison of laptops for audio: www.rmeaudio.de/english/techinfo/hdsp\_notetabe.htm.

The second is to a site that posts deals and coupons for computers. They often have incredible deals on laptops: www.bensbargains.net. As far as the M-Audio Ozone is concerned, this is a good choice: it will serve as both a MIDI controller and a sound card, which equals one less thing to carry around. We are currently using this device on one of our rigs.

Pete, Robotspeak

For more info and great home studio bargains check out



Rockstar Games is pleased to present the 3rd annual Rockstar Games Upload online media awards.

Rockstar's recurring celebration of artistic endeavor on the internet returns to dole out fistfuls of respect and cash to talented independent filmmakers, deejays, writers and interactive designers.

The call for entries deadline is September 30, 2003.

As always, all submissions must be uploaded in digital format via the official Rockstar Games Upload website.

For info on entry details, official rules, this year's judging panel, and last year's winners, visit:

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# TBC ROBBIE CONAL

### LA'S ORIGINAL RENEGADE WHEATPASTER MAKES POLITICAL POSTER ART UNFORGETTABLE.

You might not know the name, but you can't help but remember the faces. Robbie Conal's garish caricatures of higher-echelon politicians and celebrities have been stubbornly sticking to the sides of buildings near you since the '80s, when the Reagan/Bush hydra gleefully pushed American social politics down a slippery Orwellian slope. Conjoining smart-ass turns of phrase (Kenneth Starr nabs the title "Starr F\*\*ker" while George W. gets "Hail to the Thief") with a stylistic degradation that can't help but mirror an inner corruption, Conal's subversions of popular assholes have been faithfully pasted on the walls of California banks, Starbucks and more by a group of midnight guerillas one step ahead (well, sometimes) of the cops. And now, finally, the peerless punkers of Akashic Books have recognized, collating the best of Conal's slams into a hilarious, breakneck compendium called ARTBURN. Now if only the MOMAs and Mets of the world would get with the program, the art world might just be worth the wine and cheese someday.

### XLR8R: Let's talk about ARTBURN.

Robbie Conal: I've been doing a page for the LA Weekly, Los Angeles's free newspaper, for six years, and this book is a full-color collection of my best posters. There's a collection of about 32 facsimiles of the original pieces, plus some bonus post-apocalyptic remixes of the ones LA Weekly wouldn't let us print.

### XLR8R: What were the ones that LA Weekly had a problem with?

RC: Well, there was one of Attorney General John Ashcroft called "Funk Soul Brotha." It's got a little picture of Sambo going "Yowsa!" right next to him. They didn't really go

### XLR8R: What was their problem with that?

RC: I don't know. It seemed perfectly lovely to me! It had a certain racist charm to it. Then there's one of Bush Sr. and Dick Cheney having a common thought bubble with W. inside of it, called "Sloppy Seconds." That's the dance party mix. I guess they didn't go for that.

### XLR8R: How big a part of your art is the guerilla posting?

RC: I think that posting is the most direct form of unmediated public expression that a pictorial artist can have (if you're not rich, that is). It's my trickle-up theory of counter-infotainment. You know the trickle-down theory of economics? Well, this is trickle-up culture.

### XLR8R: Do you feel any kinship with artists like Winston Smith or R. Crumb or

RC: I actually went to art school all my life, so I come from a tradition that goes way back to Daumier and Goya, you know? And I was a stone-cold hippie in San Francisco, so R. Crumb and the Zap Comix guys were important to me. Leon Golub, who is probably the greatest living American political artist, was my "art dad"-he and his wife, Nancy Sparrow (who's a great feminist artist), helped me the most. Barbara

### XLR8R: How does being in LA work for you? It seems to get a bad rap for being apolitical, but the problem seems to be one of geography.

RC: Yeah, I think the only issue is geography. It's huge and geographically segregated, and that can be difficult, but I don't think it's apolitical at all. It's foaming at the mouth! I mean, everywhere I go, people are yelling at me. They say things like, "In my country, if you were putting up posters like this your head would be up on a stick in the middle of town." But LA is its own country.

### XLR8R: What's LA's best-kept secret?

RC: Hmmm. That's a good question. How much time do you have? Can I get back to you on this? The independent bookstore in Santa Monica, Midnight Special, could be its best-kept secret. The only problem is that we're hoping it'll be back after getting priced out of the Promenade. But LA's best-kept secret could also be all of its great comics outlets, like the Meltdown on Sunset. Or all of the great underground culture you can access here. It's just awesome

# GET IN THE MIX.



